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ABSTRACT

This document is a guide to provide the foundation for developing local Head Start programs into strong communities for staff and families. Using workshop and coaching activities, the guide initiates a process of staff training and development designed to foster cooperation between families and staff. These activities encourage Head Start staff to: (1) examine the impact of their own beliefs and behaviors on the development of supportive relationships with each other and with Head Start families; (2) show support for each other and for Head Start families through recognizing and reinforcing individual and family strengths; (3) see themselves together with Head Start families as members of the community who work as a team in resource development; and (4) establish collaborative partnerships with each other, Head Start families, and resources in the broader community to address recurring concerns of families. Follow-up activities include opportunities tailored to the participant to continue building on skills learned in training and ways to identify new skills and knowledge needed to expand or complement those skills through opportunities in higher education, credentialing, and community educational programs. (CK)

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HEAD START

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

Building Supportive Communities

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HEAD START®

Building Supportive Communities

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth, and Families
Head Start Bureau

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* Photo courtesy of Rosemount Head Start, Washington, D.C. *

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Preface

Building Supportive Communities provides the foundation for developing local Head Start programs into strong communities for staff and families. The following questions are to help you, as a member of the Head Start management team, to determine the benefits of the guide's training program.

- Does a strong sense of community exist among staff and families in your Head Start program?
- Does staff and family diversity work for, rather than against, your Head Start community?
- Are all staff involved in your Head Start community's efforts to support families?
- Are staff and family strengths recognized and used to enrich the resources of your Head Start community?
- Do staff and families work together as a team in identifying and responding to family concerns?
- Are staff and families working with resources in the broader community to close gaps in family support?
- Do all staff show support for families in carrying out their day-to-day job responsibilities?

As a foundation guide, *Building Supportive Communities* initiates a process of staff training and development aimed at producing affirmative responses to the questions just raised. It is essential for staff to have the opportunity to sharpen and to apply the skills taught in the guide's workshop and coaching activities with follow-up training. Thus, the *Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice* and *Continuing Professional Development* sections of this guide provide suggestions for follow-up training activities.

Subsequent training guides in this series offer additional development of staff skills in supporting families; other relevant topics in the series include family partnerships and crisis intervention. Furthermore, staff skills addressed in this series are reinforced in the parent involvement training guides, a series beginning with the guide entitled *Engaging Parents*.

Building Supportive Communities is written for the person(s) who provide training and staff development activities at the local program level, and it is equally important for the Head Start management team to be familiar with the contents of the guide. Familiarity with this guide's training will help ensure its "fit" within the existing training plan at the local program level, the selection of qualified trainers, and arrangements for follow-up training.

This guide provides both workshop and coaching activities, either of which activities can be used to achieve module outcomes. However, staff are more likely to grasp the community-building and team-building thrusts of the training when they have the opportunity to interact as a multidisciplinary group, share first-hand knowledge and experiences, and solidify their role in the "bigger picture" of supporting families.

Finally, in making arrangements for workshop activities, it is important to develop a plan that brings all, or a broad mix of, staff together for training at the local program level. If staff from more than one Head Start program are involved in the workshop, it is important for staff from the same Head Start program to work together during small group training activities.

Purpose

Head Start must respond and grow to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world...at the same time it must maintain the concepts that have made it such a success...

— Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion,
Creating a 21st Century Head Start

As presented by the Advisory Committee in *Creating a 21st Century Head Start*, Head Start is entering a new era in its development — one that requires local programs to respond to the mounting issues and concerns of today's families with both new and renewed community-building efforts.

Building Supportive Communities establishes the foundation for developing a community of support for staff and families. Activities in this guide encourage Head Start staff to:

- **Examine** the impact of their own values, beliefs, and behaviors on the development of supportive relationships with each other and with Head Start families;
- **Show** support for each other and for Head Start families through recognizing and reinforcing individual and family strengths, attentive listening, "reaching out," and displaying accepting and caring behaviors;
- **See** themselves together with Head Start families as members of the community who work as a team in resource development; and
- **Establish** collaborative partnerships with each other, Head Start families, and resources in the broader community to address recurring concerns of families.

In essence, this guide offers staff a foundation of knowledge and skills for strengthening Head Start as a supportive community and in becoming a leader in the broader community network of family support.

Audience

Community building requires the commitment and involvement of all Head Start staff. Thus, all local Head Start staff, from bus drivers to directors, are targeted for this guide's training program. Among those involved:

- **Program managers** will find the training particularly useful in determining priorities in the development of program resources and in evaluating staff practices and behaviors that enhance or hinder a supportive Head Start community;
- **Family services staff** will find the training particularly useful in implementing collaborative strategies to meet the needs of families;

- **Staff working in the areas of health, parent involvement, and education** will find the training particularly useful in developing supportive relationships with families and in working with families to achieve mutual goals; and

- **Staff working in support positions** such as bus driver, cook, aide, and assistant will find the training particularly useful in clarifying what they can do further to support families individually and as part of the Head Start team.

Performance Standards

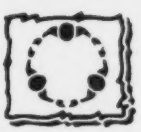
The Head Start program is based on the premise that ". . . a child benefits from a comprehensive, interdisciplinary program in which the child's entire family as well as the community must be involved." The benefits to the child are maximized when supportive relationships exist within and among staff, families, children, and other resources in the broader community. All Head Start staff, as members of a team, have a role in developing and sustaining all of those relationships. This guide's training activities will help local programs meet Head Start performance standards requiring teamwork in helping families to achieve their goals and to deal successfully with their communities.

Icons

Icons, distinguishing the four types of learning activities in this guide, are explained below.

(C) Coaching

A training strategy that fosters the development of skills through tailored instruction, demonstrations, practice, and feedback. The activities are written for a coach to work closely with one to three participants.



(W) Workshop

A facilitated group-training strategy that fosters the development of skills through activities that build on learning through group interaction. These activities are written for up to 25 participants working in small or large groups with one or two trainers.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Activities assigned by the trainer immediately following the completion of the module to help participants review key information, practice skills, and examine their progress toward expected outcomes of the module.

Continuing Professional Development

Follow-up activities for the program to support continued staff development in the regular use of the skills addressed in a particular training guide. It includes:

(1) Opportunities tailored to the participant — to continue building on the skills learned in the training;

(2) Ways to identify new skills and knowledge needed to expand or complement those skills through opportunities in such areas as higher education, credentialing, and community educational programs

Introduction

At a Glance

Modules	*Activity*	*Time**	*Materials*
Module 1: What Is Community?	Activity 1: Defining "Community" (W)	75 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handouts 1, 2, and 3
	Activity 2: Exploring the Impact of Community (C)	60 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 4
	Activity 3: Appreciating Family Diversity (W)	90 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handouts 5 and 6
	Activity 4: Learning About Families (C)	75 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handouts 5 and 6
	Activity 5: Assessing Head Start As a Community- Where Are We? Where Do We Want to Be? (W)	120 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handouts 7, 8, and 9
	Activity 6: Examining Supportive Practices (C)	60 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 9
Module 2: Strengthening the Head Start Community	Activity 1: Discovering Strengths (W)	60 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 1 and 2
	Activity 2: Drawing Out Strengths (C)	45 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 2
	Activity 3: Offering Support to Families (W)	75 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 3 and 4
	Activity 4: Showing Support (C)	45 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 3, Organizational Diagram of Head Start Staff
	Activity 5: Working As a Team (W)	60 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 5
	Activity 6: Practicing Teamwork (C)	45 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 6

(W) = Workshop Activity *(C) = Coaching Activity*

*Time may vary depending upon the size of the training group and the amount of staff interaction during activities.

Modules	*Activity*	*Time**	*Materials*
Module 3: Connecting With the Broader Community	Activity 1: Turning to Others for Help (W)	45 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 1
	Activity 2: Developing Listening Skills (C)	60 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 1
	Activity 3: Engaging Families in the Broader Community (W)	120 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handouts 2 and 3
	Activity 4: Encouraging Family Involvement in Community Life (C)	60 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 2
	Activity 5: Strengthening Family Support Through Team Planning (W)	90 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 4
	Activity 6: Contributing to Resource Development (C)	60 minutes	Easel, Newsprint, Markers, Masking Tape, Handout 5

(W) = Workshop Activity ***(C) = Coaching Activity***

*Time may vary depending upon the size of the training group and the amount of staff interaction during activities.

What Is Community?

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will:

- Know why it is important for families to experience a "strong sense of community;"
- Interact with families in a manner that demonstrates interest in learning more about them and encourages their involvement in the Head Start community;
- Carry out practices that show acceptance of diversity in family structures, values, and lifestyles; and
- Contribute to Head Start's capacity to strengthen families by reinforcing family support values, goals, and practices in their work.

Key Concepts

Activities 1 and 2

- **Community Is a Powerful Force in Our Lives.** Communities are social networks of informal and formal relationships that can make a significant difference in our lives. Our experiences with community affect our self-perceptions, our values and goals, our relationships with others, and our accomplishments.
- **The Impact of Community on Our Lives Is Linked to Our Needs.** When involvement in community contributes to our ability to meet our needs, we experience its impact as a strong and supportive force in our lives. We feel a strong sense of belonging. On the other hand, when a community is unresponsive to our needs, we feel a sense of alienation.
- **We Are Members of Many Communities.** Social groups, churches, clubs, extended family, and friends are some examples of communities to which we belong. We have different types of relationships with members of the various communities we are a part of; some relationships are strong and supportive, some are weak, and some are stressful.
- **Head Start Is One Example of a Supportive Community.** In addition to being a community that supports and strengthens families, Head Start also is part of the broader community family support network. Family support means helping families develop their own strengths and goals and deal successfully with their own communities. When families feel part of their communities, they gain the sense of belonging and of being valued as contributing community members.

Activities 3 and 4

- **Diversity in Family Structures and Lifestyles Is the "Norm" in Today's World.** In developing partnerships with families, we must move beyond a traditional definition of family to one that is broad and inclusive. A broad and inclusive definition of family recognizes family structures and ties in all shapes and forms.

- **Each Family Is Unique.** We cannot be effective in supporting a family unless we first know who the family is, from the family's own viewpoint. The best source of information about a family's composition, interests, strengths, goals, and concerns is the family, itself.

- **When We Interact With Families, We Must Be Clear About Which Values Are Ours, Which Ones Are Theirs, and Which Ones We Share.** We must stay alert for the subtle ways we expose or impose our own "agenda" and expectations on a family. When we assume our views about family life are "best," "right," or the "only" ones, we overlook the successes and strengths of disparate families. We also "miss out" on enriching our own lives through learning from the values, beliefs, and experiences of others.

Activities 5 and 6

- **Each Local Head Start Community Faces the Challenge of "Growth and Change" as It Moves Into the Mid-1990's and Beyond.** Today, the Head Start program finds itself at a critical crossroad in its history. Recognized as a program that works, Head Start is now being asked to reach more children and families and play an expanded role in supporting those families.

- **Low-Income Families Today Need Family-Centered Programs to Deal With Multiple Sources of Stress.** In its 1993 report, *Creating a 21st Century Head Start*, the Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion challenged Head Start to respond to the complex and urgent needs of today's families by meeting its full potential as a family-centered program. As envisioned by the Advisory Committee, the Head Start of the 21st century is a central community institution for low-income children and their families and an integral part of the broader community network.

- **Staff Practices Aimed at Achieving Partnerships With Families, Rather Than a Special Set of Services, Define Family Support.** Supportive staff practices include helping families to identify and to build upon their own strengths, achieve their own goals, and deal successfully with their own communities.

- **It Is Crucial for Each Local Head Start Community to Renew and Refocus Its Direction for Supporting Families.** A clear view of supporting families evolves from a foundation of values and goals developed and shared by members of the Head Start community. In addition, ongoing program assessment helps the Head Start community identify and keep pace with the changing needs and interests of families over time. A meaningful assessment draws, to the greatest extent possible, on the knowledge and perspectives of all members of the Head Start community.

Background Information

Visions that are truly shared take time to emerge. They require ongoing conversation where individuals not only feel free to express their dreams, but learn how to listen to others' dreams. Out of this listening, new insights into what is possible emerge.

— Peter Senge

Module 1 challenges Head Start staff to establish a supportive community — a community that evokes a sense of belonging and of being valued. Staff examine and discuss the ways in which community has made a difference in their lives. As experiences are recalled and shared, the meaning of community evolves, which, in turn, spurs the staff's understanding of the impact of community on the lives of families.

As the module continues, staff examine diversity in family life. Greater acceptance of differences in family composition, values, and behaviors is achieved as staff discuss and compare how various issues were dealt with in their families of origin. An exploration of different kinds of families points to a vision of community which embraces all Head Start Families.

A sharper view of Head Start as a community of support for families is realized as the module draws to a close. Staff share their perspectives on the values and goals guiding their work with families, the strengths of the Head Start community, and ways Head Start can be more effective in supporting families.

Instructions

- In addition to the handouts for each activity, duplicate the handout entitled *My Training Journal* (provided in the appendix). The "Journal" provides staff with a tool for documenting their reactions to the training, identifying ways of applying the training to their jobs, and noting areas for follow-up. It is divided into sections that parallel the guide's learning activities and is to be completed by staff at the conclusion of each activity in all three modules. Encourage staff to discuss their "Journal" comments with their trainers, coaches, and/or supervisors after completing each module.

- Before conducting the activities in this module, it is important to engage staff in the learning process with an icebreaker discussion on a selected topic. Some examples of icebreaker topics relevant to this module include:

  - What do you remember about where you grew up? What have you "carried with you" from there?

  - What were your family rules when you were a child? What are your family rules now?

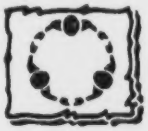
  - What do families need to be able to nurture their children?

  - What is one way you provide support to families in your work?

After giving a personal example or story about the topic selected, ask staff to take turns sharing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences based on the topic. Use the comments by staff as a "springboard" for introducing the topics and skills addressed in the module.

- Establish and make sure staff understand the "ground rules" for maintaining group and family confidentiality.

Activity 1-1: Defining "Community"



Purpose: To generate understanding among staff of what is meant by community and how a strong sense of community contributes to the quality of life.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 1: *What Community Means to Me*
- Handout 2: *Sample Eco-map*
- Handout 3: *Blank Eco-map*

1. *Establish the context for the activity and explore the various meanings of community, using the presentation material below as a guide.*

   Today, many people involved in Head Start are talking about community. Some are saying there is a need to create or strengthen the sense of community within Head Start. Others are calling for a community framework for Head Start — a framework that emphasizes bringing families together in community. There are still others saying that a vision of community is missing from the lives of too many Head Start families. While there is much talk about community, what does community really mean?

   As we begin our journey on *Building Supportive Communities*, we face the task of figuring out the meaning of community. Our task is difficult because community has many different meanings, depending upon who you ask. For some people community means the geographic boundaries of the area in which they live. For others it means little more than being recognized by the cashier at the local grocery store, while for others it means finding lifelong friends. For some it means going to a neighbor's house for coffee or singing in the church choir. There also are some who say community means "creating a family out of strangers."

   Actually, community is a composite of all the different meanings people give to it. For when people speak of community, they are really describing the ways in which community makes a difference in their lives. In this activity, we are going to take a look at how community affects us and the families we work with in Head Start.

2. *Have staff consider the impact of community on their own lives.* Ask staff to select a partner, turn to handout 1, and review the instructions. Explain that after 15 minutes, staff will reconvene and share their perspectives on the meaning of community.

3. *After 15 minutes, call time and discuss staff experiences with community.* To guide the discussion, ask staff to share their responses to the questions raised in the handout. As the discussion evolves, make sure the following points are covered:

- Our experiences with community have a powerful impact on how we perceive ourselves. When we experience a strong sense of community, we feel better about ourselves — we feel the sense of belonging and of being valued by others;

- Our experiences with community affect our values and perspectives about life. When we experience a strong sense of community, we become clearer about our core values and the direction we want our lives to take;

- Our experiences with community influence our life goals. When we experience a strong sense of community, we feel more hopeful about life and what we can accomplish;

- Our experiences with community affect the quality of our interactions with others. When we experience a strong sense of community, our capacity to build meaningful and nurturing relationships with others is enhanced, and we are strengthened by these relationships; and

- Our experiences with community have an impact on what we are able to achieve in life. When we experience a strong sense of community, our accomplishments are bolstered by the support and resources of other community members.

Trainer's Note: In addition to discussing the positive impact of community, it may be helpful for the group to explore negative community experiences or influences. For example, you might ask staff whether they have had any experiences that made it difficult for them to feel part of a community, or whether they have any fears/concerns about community influences on their children.

4. (a) *Point out that an eco-map is a useful tool for illustrating the various types of relationships we have with our communities.* Refer staff to handouts 2 and 3, which provide a sample and a blank eco-map.

   (b) Ask for a volunteer to develop, with your help, an eco-map of his/her family's interactions with the broader community. In the center circle of the eco-map, write the family's name; as communities with which the family interacts are identified, draw and label circles surrounding the center circle (e.g., work, recreation, church, school, clubs, ethnic associations, support groups, neighborhood centers, the extended family, and so on). Explain that the circles surrounding the center circle represent significant communities in the family's environment.

   (c) Then ask the volunteer to describe the nature of the family's relationship with each community as "strong and supportive," "weak," or "stressful." Draw heavy lines between the family circle and the

communities for relationships identified as "strong and supportive," broken lines for relationships identified as "weak," and crossed lines for relationships identified as "stressful." Point out that the eco-map not only shows the communities to which the family belongs, but also the primary sources of support and stress in the family's life.

5. (a) *Ask staff to develop their own eco-maps, using handout 3 to guide them.* After staff have completed their eco-maps, discuss these questions: What would your eco-maps look like, if you lived in an ideal (or perfect) world? How would your family be supported and strengthened? What would happen when your family needed help?

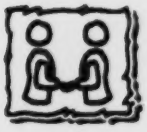
   (b) During the discussion, emphasize that all families need many different kinds of assistance in caring for their children; and, all families are able to do a better job when they are supported by their communities.

6. (a) *Develop linkages between the concept of community and Head Start.* Ask staff to "call out" examples of how families are encouraged to feel part of their Head Start community. Record responses on a sheet of newsprint labeled *Characteristics of Our Head Start Community.*

   (b) Point out that supportive communities share three elements: 1) people; 2) who interact; 3) toward common goals. All three of those elements are evident in Head Start, making it a community. That is, there are children, parents, staff, and volunteers working together to support and enrich each other's lives. In addition to being a community, Head Start helps families experience "the sense of community" and establish vital connections to the broader community.

7. *Closing.* After reinforcing the key concepts of the activity, refer staff to the handout entitled *My Training Journal.* Explain the purpose of the "Journal" and give staff a few minutes to complete the activity 1 section for module 1.

Activity 1-2: Exploring the Impact of Community



Purpose: To increase staff awareness of the importance of community and the ways they can help families feel part of the Head Start community.

Preparation

Before conducting this coaching activity, review activity 1: *Defining Community.* Key concepts, presentation materials, and summary points from the workshop activity will help prepare you for this activity.

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 4: *A Community Framework for Head Start*

1. *Introduction.* Provide the staff you are coaching with a brief overview of the topics and skills addressed in this module. Discuss the purpose of this activity and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. *Warm-up discussion.* Initiate a discussion on the topic of "community" by asking staff questions, such as the following:

   - What do you remember most about the community in which you grew up?
   - What does the word "community" mean to you?
   - What makes Head Start a community?

3. *Develop linkages between the concept of community and staff experiences.* Ask staff to think about a time when being part of a community made a difference in their life. Raise questions, such as the following:

   - When thinking back on the experience, what feelings do you remember?
   - How did the experience affect you?
   - What was it about the experience that made a difference in your life?

4. *Expand upon the concept of community.* Add to the staff's understanding of "community" by providing some examples of the ways community can have a positive impact on individuals and families. Emphasize the sense of "belonging," which evolves from feeling part of a community, as well as the sense of being "valued" as a contributing community member.

5. *Apply the concept of community to Head Start families.* Provide examples of two Head Start families — one that is very involved in the Head Start community and one that is not involved. Have staff compare the two families by raising questions, such as these:

   - Which family do you "see" as a contributing member of the Head Start community? How does this family contribute to Head Start? How would you describe your relationship with this family? How do you feel about this family?
   - Which family do you "see" as a Head Start "client?" Why is this so? How would you describe your relationship with this family? How do you feel about this family?
   - How does Head Start make a difference in the life of the "contributing" family? The "client" family?

6. *Reinforce the importance of community life for Head Start families.* Ask staff to read handout 4. As presented in the handout, discuss the ways families benefit from participation in community life and strategies for encouraging family participation in the Head Start community.

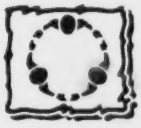
7. *Apply the concept of community to current staff practices.* Ask staff to think for a minute or two about what they do in their jobs to help families feel part of the Head Start community. Suggest staff talk with co-workers to find out what they do in their jobs to encourage families to become active members of the Head Start community. Ask staff to take notes and report back to you on the outcomes of their discussions with co-workers.

8. *Conduct a debriefing on staff practices.* Discuss what staff learned from talking with co-workers. Raise questions, such as these:

   - In what ways are staff encouraging families to become contributing members of the Head Start community?
   - What else might Head Start staff do to encourage families to become active community members? What else might you do in your job?

9. *Support change in staff practices.* Ask staff to select at least one new practice aimed at encouraging families to feel part of the Head Start community and try it out in their work. Establish a time for staff to report back to you on how families responded. Discuss the results.

Activity 1-3: Appreciating Family Diversity



Purpose: To lay the groundwork for greater acceptance and responsiveness of staff to diversity in the composition, values, and lifestyles of families within the Head Start community.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 5: *Exploring Differences in Families*
- Handout 6: *Getting to Know Different Kinds of Families*

1. *Open the activity.* Ask staff to "call out" the opportunities they have to interact with families in their jobs. Following the examples, point out the structures, values, and lifestyles of some Head Start families may be very different from those of staff. Explain that in this activity staff will explore differences in families, strategies for learning more about families, and ways of increasing family involvement in the Head Start community. Acceptance of family diversity leads to a mutually supportive community.

2. *Discuss staff perceptions of changes occurring in American families over the past 30 years, using the questions below as a guide.*

- In thinking about your cultural history or "roots," how would you describe the typical family of 30 years ago?
- In what ways are families in your culture different today?
- Why do you believe families have changed so much?
- What are some examples of different types of families you see today?

3. *As the discussion evolves, make the following points to reinforce changes seen in families over the past 30 years.*

- **More mothers are working outside the home.** A family consisting of a father working and a mother at home has almost ceased to exist. Today, 60 percent of mothers with children under age 18 work outside the home; and, that figure is expected to grow to 80 percent in another 5 years.
- **More marriages are ending in divorce.** Today, 50 percent of all marriages will end in divorce.
- **More children are living in step-parent families.** More than one-third of all children born since 1980 will live with a stepparent, as the result of their parents' divorce and remarriage.
- **More children are living in young single-parent families.** In 1955, 10 percent of American families were headed by single parents. Today, the figure is at least 25 percent and increasing. Included in that figure are the many teenagers who become mothers, two-thirds of whom are unmarried and 94 percent of whom keep their babies.
- **More children are being cared for by foster families or relatives.** In 1990 an estimated 407,000 children were in foster care, an increase of almost 50 percent since 1986. In addition, more and more children are being cared for by relatives in the extended family.
- **Diversity in the shape and structure of families is the "norm" today.** Group homes, childless couples, adoptive and "blended" families, and unmarried partners living together with or without children add to the diversity of today's families.

Trainer's Note: To make the statistics on changes in families more relevant to the training group, feel free to substitute or add data specific to the group's state or locality.

4. *Ask staff to form small groups, each comprised of three members with diverse family backgrounds.* Explain that in this exercise, staff will explore differences among their families of origin to gain a better understanding of family diversity. Refer the small groups to handout 5. Explain that after approximately 30 minutes, staff will reconvene and compare responses to the questions on the handout.

> **Trainer's Note:** Before the groups begin their discussions, acknowledge that some group members may feel uncomfortable discussing certain issues raised in the handout. Therefore, group members have the option to pass on those issues.

5. (a) *Process the small group exercise.* Ask reporters from the small groups to take turns describing the differences in families that emerged during their group's discussion in each of the following areas.

   - family composition and membership,
   - language spoken in the home,
   - family celebrations and observances,
   - the supervision of children,
   - rules about mealtime and views of "proper" nutrition,
   - expectations of children,
   - patterns of decision-making,
   - health practices, and
   - sources of support to the family and attitudes about involving "outsiders" in personal problems.

   (b) In processing the activity, point out that differences in families reflect different cultural values, beliefs, and practices. Different families have different ways of responding to the complexities of life.

6. *Ask staff to close their eyes and reflect another minute or two on their experiences "growing up."* Raise this question for staff to consider during the period of self-reflection: How do my own family experiences affect my work with Head Start families?

7. *Explore issues affecting the Head Start community's response to families.* Make sure the following issues are covered.

   - How do Head Start families today differ from your traditional view of family?

   - Why are some families more directly involved in the Head Start community than others?

   - Do you think some families "see" the Head Start community as "threatening," instead of "inviting?" Why might they feel that way?

- What can you do to encourage the sharing of Head Start community values and goals among families? To make family diversity work for rather than against the community?

- What do you think families need or want from the Head Start community?

- What can you do to learn more about families in the Head Start community?

8. *Ask staff to "brainstorm" ideas for expanding family involvement in the Head Start community.* As they do so, probe for ways staff might specifically "reach out" to:

   - teen parents,
   - working parents,
   - fathers,
   - grandparents and other relative caregivers, and
   - foster parents, god parents, close family friends, and other persons considered family.

> **Trainer's Note:** During Step 8, encourage staff to present some actual examples of Head Start families and use these examples as the springboard for a group discussion on "reaching out" strategies. Remind the group to maintain family confidentiality.

9. *In bringing the activity to a close, note that some additional ideas for "reaching out" to families are in handout 6.* Stress that through "reaching out," staff can find out what different kinds of families really are like; and, in doing so, they will come to understand and accept families seemingly so different than their own.

10. *Conclude the activity.* Emphasize the contributions all staff made to a better understanding of family diversity within the Head Start community. Encourage staff to continue to work together on making Head Start a community that recognizes and appreciates all kinds of families. Provide time for staff to complete the Module 1 activity 3 section of their training journals.

Activity 1-4: Learning About Families

Purpose: To encourage staff to interact with families in ways that convey acceptance and interest in learning more about them.

Preparation

Before conducting this coaching activity, review activity 3: *Appreciating Family Diversity*. Key concepts, presentation materials, and summary points from the workshop activity will help prepare you for this activity.

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 5: *Exploring Differences in Families*
- Handout 6: *Getting to Know Different Kinds of Families*

1. *Introduction.* Discuss the purpose of this activity with the staff you are coaching and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. *Warm-up discussion.* Have staff share their perspectives on the ways families have changed in their culture(s) during the past 30 years, using the following questions as a guide:

   - What was the typical family in your culture like 30 years ago?
   - What is the typical family in your culture like today?
   - How do you feel about the changes you have seen in families over the years? What do you think has caused these changes?

3. *Define family.* Raise the issue: Who is a family? Pursue the issue by asking more questions, such as the following:

   - Who is in your family?
   - Must individuals spend time together frequently to be a family?
   - Must family members be related?
   - Are relatives necessarily a family? If so, why? If not, why not?
   - How do family members show each other they are a family?

4. *Establish a broad and inclusive definition of family.* Assist staff in developing and accepting a definition of "family" that recognizes families in all shapes and forms. Ask staff to identify some of the different types of family structures that exist today. Emphasize that the capacity to provide children with nurturing is the distinguishing characteristic of a family — not the way a family is structured.

5. *Expand knowledge about family diversity.* Ask staff to interview two to three co-workers or community members of varying cultural and/or economic backgrounds to learn more about differences among their families. Provide staff with handout 5 to use as an interview guide. Point out some topics may make the person being interviewed feel uncomfortable and he/she may choose to pass on these. Ask staff to report back on the outcomes of their interviews within two weeks.

6. *Conduct a debriefing on staff interviews.* Ask staff to report on the results of the interviews they held with co-workers/community members. Make sure staff cover differences they discovered among families in the following areas:

   - family composition and membership,
   - language spoken in the home,
   - family celebrations and observances,
   - the supervision of children,
   - rules about mealtime and views of proper nutrition,
   - expectations of children,
   - patterns of decision-making,
   - health practices,
   - sources of support to the family, and
   - family attitudes about involving "outsiders" in personal problems.

7. *Explore staff attitudes.* Ask staff to comment on how their own family of origin compares to the families discussed with co-workers. Probe for differences in family values, beliefs, and practices and how staff feel about these differences. Point out the importance of getting to know families on an individual basis, before drawing conclusions about them.

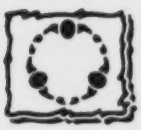
8. *Examine the impact of family diversity on staff practices.* Discuss family diversity within the Head Start community, raising questions such as these:

   - How are families you work with in Head Start different than your own family? Similar to your own family?
   - How would you describe the families easiest for you to relate to in your work? The most challenging for you to relate to?
   - Why do you think some families are more involved in the Head Start community than others?
   - What issues may be deterring some families from getting involved in the Head Start community?
   - What do you do now to get to know Head Start families on an individual basis?

9. *Support change in staff practices.* Engage staff in a discussion of strategies for learning more about the families they work with. To generate ideas for discussion, have staff review handout 6 with you. Have staff identify two or three strategies to implement in their work. Set a time for staff to report back to you on what they learned about families as a result of the strategies they implemented.

> **Coaching Note:** Helping staff understand and accept differences in families may require considerable discussion and time. Be careful not to rush the process.

Activity 1-5: Assessing Head Start as a Community — Where Are We? Where Do We Want to Be?



Purpose: To establish a direction, shared by staff, on the ways the Head Start community can grow and change on behalf of families.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 7: *Values and Goals*
- Handout 8: *Goals of Family Support Programs*
- Handout 9: *A Checklist on Community-Building*

1. *To open the activity, ask staff to take turns describing a source of stress for a family they know in the Head Start community.* (Before staff begin, remind them that families are not to be identified by name.) As sources of family stress are identified, record them on a sheet of newsprint labeled *Family Stressors.*

2. *Reinforce examples of family stressors.* Point out that today's families are experiencing greater stress due to declining family income, more births to teens, lack of access to health care, growing hunger and homelessness, and the substance abuse epidemic. Further, many families today are exposed to dangers almost unknown a generation ago. For example, some children are not allowed to play outside in their neighborhoods — even in front of their own homes — for fear of violence. All families are feeling uncertain about how to teach their children strong values and to resist negative peer pressure.

3. *Explain that in this activity staff have the opportunity to create a framework for a supportive Head Start community.* Emphasize that the "world" of Head Start families is dramatically different than when Head Start began in 1965. To meet the challenges of a new age, it is crucial for

each local Head Start community to renew and refocus its direction for supporting families. Point out that, in a "strong and supportive" community, members share a core set of values and work toward common goals. Thus, staff will focus first on the values and goals of the Head Start community.

4. (a) *Clarify core values.* Ask staff to take a few minutes to think about the basic values, beliefs, or commitments that members of the Head Start community share in regard to families. For example, "all families have strengths," "all families want the best for their children," and "families and staff can teach and learn from each other."

   (b) After a few minutes, ask staff to "call out" words or phrases that reflect their thoughts about the community's values. With the group's help, refine the words or phrases, as necessary, to achieve a set of core values that staff agree upon.

   (c) Throughout the process, record the group's work on a sheet of newsprint labeled *Core Values*. When the list is completed, refer staff to handout 7. Ask staff to complete the first two sections of the handout.

5. *Clarify goals.* Ask staff to take a few minutes to think about the goals that guide their work with families in the Head Start community. Then, assist staff in developing a list of goals relevant to their work. As goals are cited by staff, record them on a sheet of newsprint labeled *Goals*.

6. *Refer staff to handout 8.* Point out linkages between the goals generated by staff to the goals on the handout. Ask staff to turn again to handout 7 and complete the handout's last section.

> **Trainer's Note:** It is important for staff to receive a final version of the core values and goals generated during the activity. Let staff know you will be making copies of the lists and distributing them prior to the next training session.

7. *Provide the context for the assessment exercise.* Explain that staff will now move further toward their view of family support by completing an assessment of their Head Start community. The assessment exercise is intended to help staff answer two basic questions: Where are we now in our work to support families? Where do we want to be? Explain that support is based upon relationships staff build with families, and practices staff follow in their work. Support for families is shown by staff who:

   - **Emphasize the family unit.** Staff offer parents help and encouragement in meeting the demands of work and family life so they, in turn, can do a better job of nurturing their children. At the core of family support programs are caring, trusting staff partnerships with whole families.

- **Build on family strengths.** Staff encourage families to identify and build on their strengths. Families are encouraged to work together to meet shared needs and to bring about change in their neighborhoods and communities. Families are not cast in the role of clients, or service recipients; instead, they are seen as contributing members of their communities.

- **Provide nurturing connections with others.** Staff offer families the opportunities to make friends with other families in similar circumstances, share their struggles and successes, and gain strength from each other. Staff bring isolated families together in "community" and engage families in broader circles of community life.

- **Offer flexible and responsive services.** Staff tailor their efforts to meet the varied needs of individual families — be they at-risk, stable, or thriving. Services or resources for families change or adapt as new needs emerge.

- **Work to prevent crises.** Staff aim to keep families healthy and intact through a range of preventive services. However, if serious problems or crises occur, families are connected quickly to the appropriate services in the broader community.

- **Show sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and other differences among families.** Strengthening families does not mean "molding them into one form." Staff work hard to preserve and enhance the identities of individual participating families.

- **Coordinate and cooperate with others.** Staff recognize they cannot do it all! They forge partnerships with families and other resources in the broader community. They act as brokers between families and existing services, while identifying and filling in service gaps to create a web of support.

8. (a) *Initiate the assessment exercise.* Refer staff to handout 9. Explain that the Checklist is intended to help staff determine where they are now in their work to support families, as well as ways families can be supported further in their work.

   (b) Divide staff into three (or more) small groups and assign each group to two of the major sections on the Checklist; for example, *Family-Centered Focus* and *Focus on Family Strengths*. Ask each group to appoint a facilitator and a reporter. Explain that the large group will reconvene in 30 minutes to discuss the results of each small group's assessment.

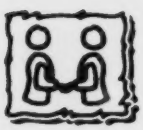
9. *Debrief the assessment exercise.* After 30 minutes, call time and ask reporters from the small groups to present a summary of their group's discussion, beginning with a brief explanation of the sections assigned to their group. Ask reporters to focus on their group's suggestions for "growth or change." As suggestions are cited, record them on the sheet of newsprint with the corresponding section label:

   1) Family-Centered Emphasis,
   2) Focus on Family Strengths,
   3) Nurturing Connections,
   4) Flexible and Responsive Services,
   5) Appreciation for Cultural and Family Diversity, and
   6) Community Linkages.

10. *Review the suggestions for each section.* During the review, probe for specific examples of what staff might do, or do differently, in their jobs to achieve the suggested changes. Then, ask staff to rank the suggestions in each section from highest to lowest priority.

11. *Closing.* End the activity by summarizing the results of the group's work. Reinforce the values and goals established by the group, as well as the outcomes of the assessment process. Capture the essence of the group's view for "growth or change" by citing the suggestions ranked as "highest priority." Provide time for staff to complete the Module 1 activity 5 section of their training journals.

Activity 1-6: Examining Supportive Practices



Purpose: To encourage staff to take an active role in assessing and improving the Head Start community's family support efforts.

Preparation

Before conducting this coaching activity, review activity 5: *Assessing Head Start as a Community- Where Are We? Where Do We Want to Be?*. Key concepts, presentation materials, and summary points from the workshop activity will help prepare you for this activity.

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 9: *A Checklist on Community-Building*

1. *Introduction.* Discuss the purpose of this activity with the staff you are coaching and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. *Warm-up discussion.* Explore sources of stress for families today by raising questions such as these:

- What are some sources of stress in your family?
- What are some sources of stress you see in the families you work with?

3. (a) *Establish the rationale for providing support to families.* Discuss the impact of stress on families. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

   - How are families affected by stress?
   - What are some of the ways families attempt to cope with stress?
   - What do families need to be able to cope with stress more effectively?

   (b) Point out that staff working in supportive, programs such as Head Start, help families cope more effectively with the demands and stresses of daily life by showing certain practices in their work.

4. *Identify supportive practices.* Using the presentation material provided in the workshop activity 5 as a guide, present staff with an overview of core supportive practices. While doing the overview, stop and discuss practices relevant to the staff's job. For example, raise the question: How do you involve family members in **your** work?

5. *Assess supportive practices in the Head Start community.* Go over handout 9 with staff. Focus on two or three sections most relevant to the staff's job. Have staff identify areas they see as program strengths and areas they would like to see improved.

6. *Reinforce change in staff practices.* Ask staff to brainstorm responses to the question: What can you do in your job to show greater support for families? Record staff ideas on newsprint. From the list created through brainstorming, ask staff to pick out at least one idea they will pursue in their work over the course of the next two weeks. Have staff report back to you on the results of their efforts.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 1 are presented below. After completing Module 1, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually or as part of a small team.

- **Helping Families Experience the Sense of Community**

  Ask staff to keep a daily log of their interactions with Head Start families over the course of two weeks. At the end of the two weeks, ask staff to review their logs and respond to these questions: How do I show families I value them? How do I help families experience the sense of belonging to the Head Start community? What could I do differently? Meet with staff to go over their logs and responses to the questions. Help staff pinpoint ways they can promote "the sense of community" in families during the course of their work.

- **Using the Eco-Map as a Family Assessment Tool**

  Modeling the process taught in activity 1, ask staff to do an eco-map with a Head Start family to learn more about the relationships between the family and its social environment and the sources of stress and support in the family's life. Suggest that in doing the eco-map, staff begin with a diagram of the family structure in the center circle, and then use the surrounding circles to identify the informal resources or natural helpers within the family's social network. Ask staff to report back within two weeks on:

  1) What they learned about the family from the eco-map, and

  2) What they plan to do with the information.

- **Getting to Know Different Kinds of Families**

  - Have staff, individually or as part of a small team, select and follow through with one of the examples presented in handout 6. Establish a timeframe for carrying out the example, based upon the complexity of the task involved. Ask staff to report back on their experiences.

  - Ask staff to initiate a conversation with a Head Start family very different than their own to learn about the family's structure, values, and lifestyle. During the conversation, staff might ask the family questions such as these: How long have you lived in this area? Where did you live before? Why did you move here? Who are the members of your family? Who are you closest to? What are your hopes for your child? What worries you most about being a parent? If you could change one thing about your family, what would it be? What do you think is important for Head Start to know about your family?

Following the conversation, have staff develop a list of similarities and differences between the two families (i.e., their own and the one they spoke with) and discuss their findings with you. Set a timeframe of two weeks for reporting back.

- **Getting to Where We Want to Be**

  Have staff who worked together during activity 5 meet and discuss further the priorities for "growth and change" relevant to the assigned sections of Handout 9: *A Checklist on Community-Building*. Ask staff to focus on these two questions: What needs to happen to get our Head Start community to where we want it to be? What resources do we have available to help us get there? Allow two weeks for staff to complete the assignment. Then, ask staff to present the outcomes of their work to members of the Head Start community for further discussion.

Handout 1: What Community Means to Me

Instructions

Tell your partner about a time in your life when you felt part of a "community." You might want to share an experience from your childhood — a time of feeling part of a peer group, a neighborhood, a school, an athletic team, a club, and so on. You may, on the other hand, want to share a more recent time — a time of feeling part of a parents' group, a civic group, a neighborhood association, a church, a work team, and so on. Take a minute or two to try to recall the details of the experience. Then, take turns sharing your responses to the following questions.

Discussion Questions

- When thinking back on the experience, what feelings do you remember? Do you remember the sense of "belonging?" Of being valued by others?

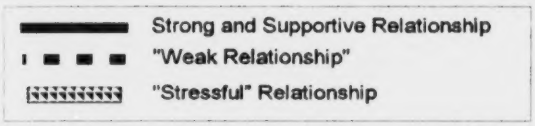
- How did the experience affect you? Did the experience influence your values, goals, accomplishments, or perspectives about life? If so, in what ways?

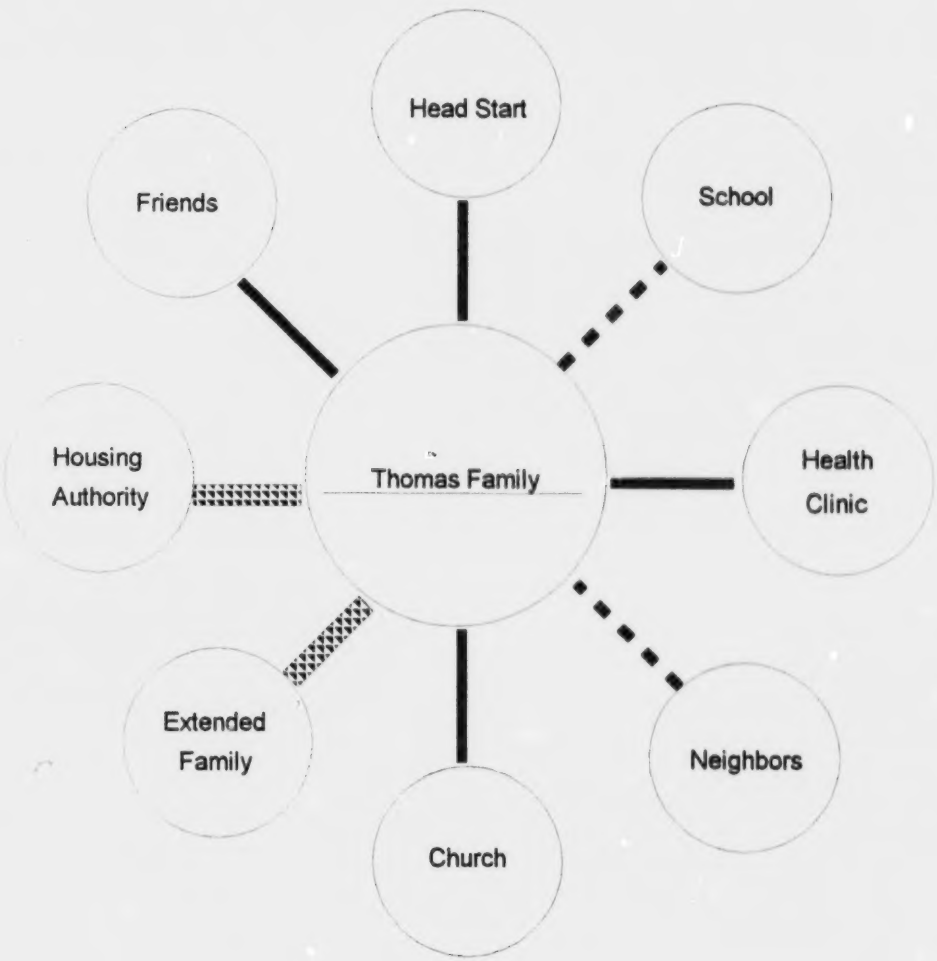
- Did the experience result in any friendships? If so, what words or phrases would describe those friendships?

- Overall, how did the experience make a difference in your life? What was it about the experience that made the difference?

Handout 2: Sample Eco-Map

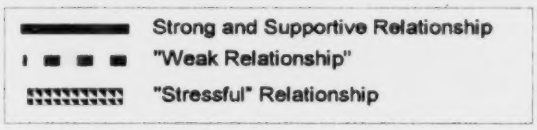
The Eco-Map below illustrates one family's relationships with various communities.

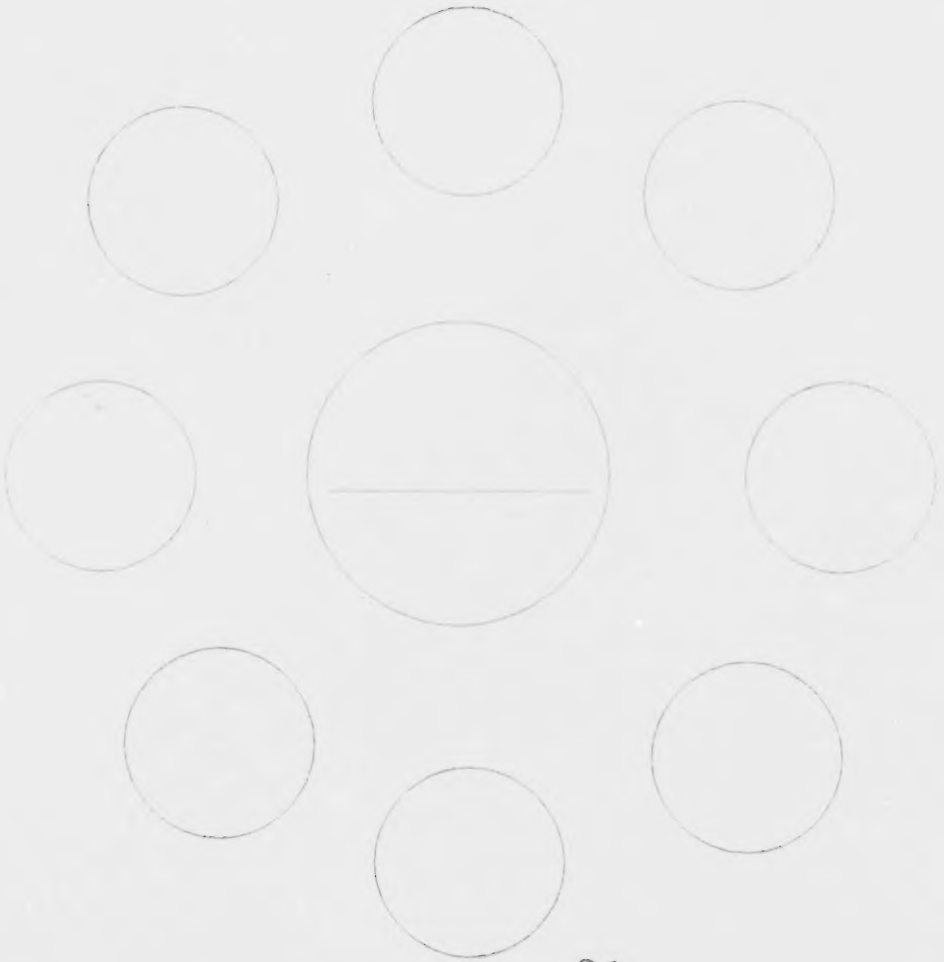




Handout 3: Blank Eco-Map

Instructions *Think about the various communities that affect your family and the type of relationship your family has with each: strong and supportive, weak, or stressful. Then, complete the eco-map below. When you are done, you will have a better grasp of the sources of support and stress in your family's life. On the back of the handout jot down what you might be able to do to strengthen the community relationships you have identified as "weak" or "stressful."*





Handout 4: A Community Framework for Head Start[1]

Overview. This is a framework for Head Start programming which emphasizes family involvement in community life, both within the local Head Start center and in the broader community. We believe Head Start's work with families must include: bringing isolated families together in community; building the capacity of families to meet shared needs and to bring about change in their neighborhoods and communities; and engaging families in broader circles of community life. This approach views Head Start families as active members of communities, rather than as deficient clients in a service system.

Why is a community framework needed? Low-income families are cast in passive "client "roles by many public programs. Neighborhoods need active groups of local citizens working toward change. When we fail to build healthy communities, negative centered "community" around crime and drugs can develop, making it more difficult for Head Start to be successful.

Prevailing assumption. The community framework stands in contrast to a prevailing assumption we've held that low-income families simply need more or better professional services from public programs. "Community services" are different from "community life;" families need both.

Goals. The goals of a community framework are: to develop a strong sense of community and mutual support among Head Start families; to encourage Head Start families to take responsible group action around neighborhood problems; and to expand families' social networks through active involvement with grassroots membership-based organizations (churches, cultural groups, etc.).

Implementation strategies for a community framework:

Strategy #1: Conduct community-building activities within local Head Start centers.

- Offer initial activities which help families to form positive relationships with each other.
- Set up "Skill/Resource Exchanges" that identify tools, materials, and expertise of members.
- Delegate additional areas of decision making to local parent groups.
- Provide special recognition to Head Start members who are "community builders."

Strategy #2: Conduct community assessments at the center level and promote center action plans. Conduct a survey that will give local parent groups an overview of shared needs, interests, and assets around which they can take constructive action. Encourage the parent group to use the results of the survey as a basis for developing a "center action plan."

Strategy #3: Offer practical group solutions to needs of working families. Significant involvement with Head Start parents who are working or attending school might best be achieved through approaches that make a full-day Head Start center available some evenings and weekends for use by families who are members of the center. Consider serving an early evening meal or starting an evening care co-op for student families to take turns studying and caring for children. With the constantly changing jobmarket, it would behelpful for full-day Head Start sites to have "job clubs" and employment bulletin boards for sharing leads on new or better jobs.

[1]Carman, C. *A Community Framework for Head Start.* Hawkeye Area Community Action Program, Cedar Rapids, IA, 1994.

Handout 4: A Community Framework for Head Start (continued)

Strategy #4: Develop community-involvement directories and activities. In order to reduce family isolation and expand families' social networks, each local Head Start center should have a directory for families of grassroots membership-based community organizations including churches, art/cultural groups, ethnic associations, neighborhood associations, youth groups, and interest clubs. This approach is consistent with Head Start's multi-cultural philosophy as it can put families in touch with community groups that promote a special appreciation for specific ethnic/cultural roots and with other organizations that cross cultural lines. These community groups are distinct from "community services" in that they do not categorize families by income or deficiency. This sector of the community has the potential to provide significant social support to families and to meet the basic human need to "belong" and to be needed by others. Supportive relationships often grow out of participation in community organizations. Head Start itself provides a sense of "belonging" for many parents, which they miss when they leave the program. As we look at transition of children to public schools, we should also look at transition of families into wider circles of community life.

Strategy #5: Establish a community-involvement advisory committee. A community-involvement committee, which includes parents, should be established at the grantee level to foster an atmosphere of inclusion for low-income families among grassroots community organizations. This local committee can address barriers to family participation in community organizations, effective outreach, and welcoming families. This committee should represent the diversity of the Head Start membership.

Strategy #6: Include past Head Start families in center community activities. Family involvement in community activities at a Head Start center does not have to end automatically when their children leave Head Start. Since this involvement is informal in nature and doesn't require funding, families should feel comfortable coming to potlucks or participating in Head Start neighborhood improvement efforts even after officially leaving the program.

Strategy #7: Examine staff roles and the need for staff development. Community-building in Head Start requires some new staff skills such as expertise in initial group formation, consensus decision-making, conflict resolution, and activity planning. Staff should also be role models for the supportive relationships which parents are encouraged to develop with each other.

Strategy #8: Develop a Head Start model that does not cluster families by income. We need to have a service option which does not cluster families by income. This could involve cooperative ventures between Head Start and existing community early childhood programs. Classroom services which meet Head Start Performance Standards could be provided by the early childhood program through a service contract, and the Head Start grantee could directly provide other key component services needed by Head Start families. This model would result in families and children of varying income levels routinely interacting.

Handout 5: Exploring Differences in Families[2]

Instructions

Appoint a reporter for your group. Read the questions below; then, taking one question at a time, discuss how the issues were addressed in your family during your childhood.

Discussion Questions

1. Who was included in your family? Who were you closest to? Did any adult, other than your parents, take care of you for a period of time, or have a strong influence on your development?

2. What was your relationship with extended family? What part did aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, godparents, and close family friends play in your life?

3. What language was spoken primarily in your home?

4. What special celebrations, holidays, or activities were honored by your family? What did your family do during these times?

5. Who took care of you when your mother had to go out? At what age were you left alone? At what age were children in your family given responsibility to care for other children in the family?

6. What were your family's "rules" about meals? Did everyone sit down at the table together? Who cooked the meals? What kinds of foods did you eat a lot of? Were there any foods you were not allowed to eat?

7. What was your "place" in the family? Oldest or youngest? Only girl? And what expectations did this "place" carry?

8. How did your family make decisions? Did family members make decisions together, or did only one person decide? Did grandparents, relatives, or others considered to be part of the family have a "say" in decisions? What decisions were children permitted to make for themselves?

9. What did your family to when you were ill? Were you given certain foods, medicines, or home treatments to help you get well?

10. Who did your family turn to for help in times of need? Did it have to be someone in the family?

11. Which of your family's values and patterns of behavior do you still adhere to, and which have you changed?

[2]Adapted from *Introductory Guide.* Arizona Administration for Children Youth and Families, 1994; and from *Looking Out, Looking In, Multicultural Infusion in Head Start,* Spokane County Head Start, Spokane, Washington, 1994.

Handout 6: Getting to Know Different Kinds of Families

Below are some ways to learn more about Head Start families, as well as some ways to encourage their involvement in the Head Start community. Although the term "parents" is used often in the examples, it means any adult considered "family."

- Encourage good memories in families. Take the time to look at family photos, listen to stories about the family, and discuss important family events.

- Ask parents to draw their family in any way that depicts its members and their importance. Crayons and large sheets of papers promote creativity in this. Then, discuss the drawing.

- Find out who is important to the family; ask about friends, relatives, neighbors, employers, etc.

- Take the time to learn about the parents' dreams and hopes for their children's future.

- If possible, arrange field trips to parents' places of work, so that children and staff can see parents "on the job" and parents can explain their work and introduce co-workers.

- Invite parents to be the children's "special guests" at snack or lunch time.

- Ask parents with special talents, hobbies, or knowledge (e.g., cake decorating, auto repair, weight reduction, karate, aerobics) to come to Head Start to share their talents with other parents, children, and staff.

- Encourage Head Start families to develop a "resource exchange," so they are able to support each other in practical ways. For example, a parent with home repair skills might be willing to make a simple repair in exchange for some child care. Rides to work might be offered to a parent not on a bus line in exchange for some sewing or mending.

- Help Head Start families organize "potluck suppers," parties, or "parents night out" events.

Handout 6: Getting to Know Different Kinds of Families (continued)

- Offer some practical solutions to the needs of working parents or parents attending school. For example, it might be possible for a full-day Head Start center to serve early evening meals for working families and staff. Or, it might be possible to establish laundry facilities at the center, which are available to parents until late evening. And, for parents attending school, it might be possible to start an evening care babysitting cooperative at the center, where parents take turns providing child care while others study.

- Initiate a "job club" for parents, so they have a vehicle for sharing leads on new or better jobs, tips on finding work, and so on.

- Establish focus groups, comprised of parents and staff, as vehicles for discussing various issues affecting families. Some possible focus group topics include: preventing drug abuse; "moving on" to public school, sharing parenting responsibilities; making neighborhoods safe; and, challenges of being a teen parent.

- Sponsor a family "show and tell" event. Ask families to bring items of cultural significance to them to the event. "Cultural items" could include food, recipes, clothing, arts and crafts, books, musical instruments, cassettes of music, family heirlooms, etc. During the event, ask family members to describe the items they brought and what these items mean to their family.

Handout 7: Values and Goals

Instructions

Wait for the trainer to give you directions on when and how to complete each part of this handout.

Part I: **The two core values most important to me in my work are:**

Part II: **The core values I can reinforce most in my work are:**

Part III: **The goals I would most like to see us work on are:**

Handout 8: Goals of Family Support Programs[3]

Despite outward differences, all family support programs work toward the goal of strengthening families to ensure the well-being and healthy development of the next generation. In achieving that goal, family support programs:

- Help families to cope more effectively with the stresses of daily life.
- Give families new information and ideas about child development and child rearing to make parenting more rewarding and to help parents more effectively nurture and support their children.
- Reduce the social isolation many families experience by bringing them into contact with other families in similar circumstances.
- Link families with other services and supports, which can help them meet their basic needs, before the needs intensify and reach crisis proportion.

[3]Adapted from Allen, M., Brown, P., and Finlay, B. *Helping Children By Strengthening Families: A Look at Family Support Programs.* Children's Defense Fund, 1992.

Handout 9: A Checklist on Community-Building

Instructions

This Checklist will help you identify the family support strengths of your Head Start community, as well as ways the community might "grow and change" in support of families. The Checklist is divided into six sections that reflect the major characteristics of supportive programs (e.g., "Family-Centered Emphasis").

Review the two sections of the Checklist assigned to your group. Within each section, there are questions to guide your assessment of the Head Start community's strengths. Place check marks in the spaces next to the questions you rate as strengths. Think about what you do that shows support for families and what you would like to see improved. Share your thoughts and suggestions for improvement with other members of your group.

1. **Family-Centered Emphasis** means that children are viewed within the context of their families, with parents supported in their roles as caregivers, teachers, and promoters of their children's development. Does your Head Start community:

   ___ Offer families help and encouragement in meeting the demands of parenting and family life? Do families benefit?

   ___ Conduct annual (or more frequent) surveys of families to determine the needs and interests they share in common and provide feedback to families and staff on the results? Are the results used?

   ___ Have a family resource room where families can meet and support each other informally, obtain information, post notices, etc.? Is the room used?

   ___ Offer evening and weekend gatherings for families involved in work or school during the day? Do families come?

   ___ Successfully involve men important in the lives of Head Start children (e.g., fathers, grandfathers, uncles, older brothers, friends) in community activities? Do they participate?

   Suggestions for growth or change:

   1)

   2)

   3)

Handout 9: A Checklist on Community-Building (continued)

2. **A Focus on Family Strengths** means that families are helped to identify and build on their strengths. Does your Head Start community:

__ View families as contributing **members** of the community, rather than as" clients?" How many families contribute?

__ Encourage families to work together to meet shared needs or address shared concerns? Do families work together? In what ways?

__ **Actively** encourage families to be involved in the community's decision-making and policy-setting processes? In what ways?

__ Train and hire current and past parents for staff positions? To what extent?

__ Offer a "Skills/Resource Exchange" that lists the tools, materials, skills, areas of expertise, and so on, possessed by individual families so that families can be resources to each other. Is the "Exchange" used?

__ Celebrate the "successes" of families, such as giving special recognition to parents who receive their GEDs, serve as Head Start volunteers, are sources of support to other parents, and so on. How often?

Suggestions for growth or change:

1)

2)

3)

Handout 9: A Checklist on Community-Building (continued)

3. **Nurturing Connections** means there are opportunities for families to make friends with other families in similar circumstances, share their struggles and successes, and gain strength from each other. In addition, it means helping families establish networks of support in the broader community. Does your Head Start community:

___ Offer a variety of informal support groups for families? What are the groups? How often do they meet?

___ Sponsor activities which help families to form positive relationships with each other, such as potluck suppers, recreational events, family group outings to special events in the broader community? How often? Do families come?

___ Keep families informed about churches, clubs, organizations, ethnic associations, etc., in the broader community that they might be interested in joining? In what ways? Do families join?

___ Act as a motivator in bringing interested families together to create informal resources, such as a food-buying club, a study group, or a child care cooperative? What resources have been created? Are they being used?

___ Publicize mutual-help groups in the broader community which are available to families, such as Parents Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous? Do families attend?

___ Encourage families to "drop-in" and visit with other families and staff? Do families come?

Suggestions for growth or change:

1)

2)

3)

Handout 9: A Checklist on Community-Building (continued)

4. **Flexible and Responsive Services** means that programs adapt to meet the changing concerns and interests of families. Does your Head Start community:

__ Assess families on an ongoing and regularly updated basis? Are the results used?

__ Encourage **all** staff to work as a team in forming partnerships with individual families? To what extent?

__ Encourage staff to meet and talk with families in their own homes, beyond the required two home visits per year per child? Who visits? How often?

__ Tailor services to meet the varied concerns of individual families, rather than expecting families to "fit" into existing services? In what ways?

__ Have a family advisory committee, representing a cross-section of Head Start families, that offers suggestions on the types of services and resources families need most? What happens to the suggestions?

__ Have enough staff to be able to be responsive to the goals and interests of families? Are staff responsive?

Suggestions for growth or change:

1)

2)

3)

Handout 9: A Checklist on Community-Building (continued)

5. **Appreciation for Cultural and Family Diversity** means that differences in individual families are respected and accepted. Does your Head Start community:

___ Include a representative cross-section of families as members of Head Start councils and committees? What types of families are represented?

___ Involve children in learning about different cultures through stories, songs, snacks, etc.? To what extent?

___ Invite persons, who represent different cultural and ethnic groups, to visit and share information about their group's heritage, customs, values, practices, etc.? How often? Does this make a difference?

___ Take special steps to "reach out" and engage different kinds of families in the community, such as support groups for grandparents in caregiving roles? Do families become involved?

___ Have staff or access to interpreters who are able to translate for non-English speaking families? Are interpreters used? How often?

___ Celebrate the special holidays or observances of different cultural and ethnic groups? In what ways?

Suggestions for growth or change:

1)

2)

3)

Handout 9: A Checklist on Community-Building (continued)

6. **Community Linkages** means that partnerships exist among service providers and organizations to help ensure that families have access to needed resources. Does your Head Start community:

___ Have collaborative ties with service providers, organizations, groups, and leaders in the broader community? Does this make a difference?

___ Teach the broader community about Head Start's mission, goals, Values, parent involvement practices, and so on? In what ways?

___ Invite persons from the broader community, who represent different programs or groups, to visit and learn about Head Start? How often? Do they come?

___ Form alliances, coalitions, or partnerships with the broader community in efforts to meet the needs of low-income families? Who is involved? Have needs been met?

___ Sponsor or belong to a community-involvement advisory committee that promotes family participation in community organizations? Are families participating? To what extent?

___ Offer experiences that take children and/or their families to places where they can learn about how the broader community "works," such as businesses, government offices, public schools, and so on? How often? Do children and families benefit?

___ Encourage families to volunteer in the broader community, such as in hospitals, libraries, nursing homes, and so on? Do families volunteer?

___ Promote "inclusive" attitudes and practices among groups, organizations, associations, etc. in the broader community, so Head Start families can comfortably participate as regular members? In what ways? Are families participating?

___ Have staff go with parents on their initial visits to individual helpers, service providers, public schools, and so on? Does this make a difference?

Suggestions for growth or change:

1)

2)

3)

Strengthening the Head Start Community

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will:

- Acknowledge their own strengths and use them as strategies for supporting families;
- Interact with others in a manner that "draws out" their strengths and helps them see themselves from a perspective of strengths;
- Identify staff strengths and resources and incorporate them into efforts to support families; and
- Include families in a team approach to assessment and support activities.

Key Concepts

Activities 1 and 2

- **The Way We View Ourselves Affects the Way We Interact With Others.** There are two basic ways of viewing ourselves. The first way is from a perspective of deficit, which focuses on what is wrong with us — our weaknesses, our problems. The second way is from a perspective of strength, which focuses on what is right with us — our internal and external resources, and our capacity to solve problems. These same two perspectives influence our views of and interactions with others.
- **New Resources Are Discovered When We View Ourselves and Others From a Perspective of Strengths.** A shift away from a perspective of deficit to one of strengths is critical to any community's success in supporting families. In terms of the Head Start community, a perspective of strengths emanates from the belief that every staff member and every family brings valuable resources to the family support arena.
- **Creativity, or Finding Different Paths to the Same End, Is the Key to a Growth-Oriented Head Start Community.** Recognition of one's own strengths leads to recognition of the strengths in others. Through the process of discovering strengths, new resources for supporting and enriching the lives of families also are discovered.

Activities 3 and 4

- **Opportunities to Support Each Other Exist Every Day.** All interactions among people provide opportunities for giving or receiving support. Thus, on any given day, the potential for giving or receiving support is great.
- **Support Is Demonstrated in a Variety of Ways.** Support is not limited to any particular activity or strategy. Rather, it is reflected in the many ways we "reach out" to others, listen to others, and assist others in coping with the stresses of daily life.

- **Head Start Staff Share Responsibility in Providing Support to Families.** While the hub of family support rests with family services staff, all staff in the Head Start community have a critical role in supporting families.

Activities 5 and 6

- **A Team Means Working Together to Accomplish a Goal.** A team is two or more people who agree to work together to achieve a common goal. People working together can achieve a common goal more easily and more effectively than they can by working separately. In the Head Start community, all staff are members of a team working toward the overall goal of strengthening the capacity of families to nurture their children physically, emotionally, and intellectually.

- **Families Are Integral Members of the Head Start Team.** Families are the most important members of the Head Start team. The primary role of other team members is to help and support families in identifying their own strengths, needs, goals, and ways of achieving their goals.

- **A Team's Effectiveness Is Influenced by Five Key Components.** As with any successful team, a team working to support families must include the following five components: a common identified goal; an emotional bond among team members based on shared feelings of concern; mutual respect; defined roles; and clear communication.

- **Clear Communication Is the Most Critical Component of a Team.** If communication among team members is frequent, open, and clear, most difficulties in other areas can be overcome. If communication is unclear or nonexistent, almost certainly team members will drift apart, and the team approach to family support will collapse.

Background Information

If a community values its children, it must cherish their parents.
— John Bowlby

Many resources for families exist within the Head Start community. Module 2 is designed to help staff recognize those resources and build upon them in their work to support and strengthen families. As a beginning point, staff are encouraged to see themselves and each other from a perspective of strengths. After completing an exercise designed to draw out the strengths each staff member brings to Head Start, staff turn to the ways their personal strengths can be "tapped" as resources for families.

As the module continues, a scenario, depicting a family with multiple unmet needs, provides the opportunity for staff to clarify and sharpen their respective roles in supporting families. Staff learn there are many ways to show support as they interact with families; they each have a unique contribution to make to the family support arena; and, supporting families is a responsibility they share.

Last, staff explore how they might work together more effectively in support of families. Using the same family scenario as the impetus for discussion, staff consider various aspects of a team approach, including the team's composition, goals, and activities. The advantages of a team approach are reinforced as staff role play how they would interact, share information, and "pool" resources as a team.

Instructions

- In addition to the handouts for each activity, duplicate the handout entitled *My Training Journal* (provided in the appendix). The "Journal" provides staff with a tool for documenting their reactions to the training, identifying ways of applying the training to their jobs, and noting areas for follow-up. It is divided into sections that parallel the guide's learning activities and is to be completed by staff at the conclusion of each activity in all three modules. Encourage staff to discuss their "Journal" comments with their trainers, coaches, and/or supervisors after completing each module.

- Before conducting the activities in this module, it is important to engage staff in the learning process with an "icebreaker" discussion on a selected topic. Some examples of icebreaker topics relevant to this module include:

  – What three words best describe you? What do those words mean to you?

  – Who has been a source of support to you? In what ways?

  – What are two aspects of your job other staff should know about?

  – What does the word "team" mean to you?

  After giving a personal example or story about the topic selected, ask staff to take turns sharing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences on the topic. Use the comments by staff as a "springboard" for introducing the topics and skills addressed in the module.

- Establish and make sure staff understand the training program's "ground rules" for maintaining group and family confidentiality.

Activity 2-1: Discovering Strengths

Purpose: To enhance recognition of the strengths and resources each individual staff member brings to the Head Start community.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 1: *My Strengths*
- Handout 2: *Looking for Strengths*

1. (a) *Opening.* Ask staff to turn to handout 1. Without further explanation, ask staff to list all of their strengths in the "Personal Strengths" section of the handout.

   (b) After five minutes, call time and ask staff to share their reactions to the assignment. Did they find the assignment difficult or easy? How many strengths are on their list?

2. (a) *Introduce the activity.* Point out that we often view ourselves and others from a perspective of deficit (i.e., what is "wrong" with ourselves or others), rather than from a perspective of strengths (i.e., what is "right" about ourselves or others.) Explain that the purpose of this activity is to help staff shift toward a perspective of strengths through a process of discovering strengths in themselves and in their co-workers.

   (b) Refer staff to handout 2 and review the instructions. Ask staff to select a partner. Explain that the large group will reconvene in 20 minutes and, at that time, partners will be asked to share what they learned about each other.

3. *After 20 minutes, reconvene the group.* Explain that you want staff to imagine they have just been asked to introduce a new staff member (i.e., their partner) to the Head Start community. In making their introductions, staff should point out the strengths or resources the "new staff member" brings to the community; for example:

   - A particular skill, talent, or hobby;
   - A personal characteristic, such as having a good sense of humor, or being friendly and easy to talk to; and
   - "Connections" to the broader community, such as membership in a club or church.

4. *Give staff a few minutes to compose their introductions; then ask for a volunteer to start the introduction process.* As strengths are revealed during the introduction, record them on sheets of newsprint labeled "Skills," "Personal Characteristics," and "Community Connections." Continue with other volunteers until all staff have been introduced to the group.

5. *Process the activity by raising the following questions.*

   - What feelings did you experience as you were being introduced to the group? Did you learn anything new about yourself? What did you learn?

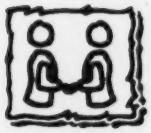
   - What did you learn from the introductions of other staff? Did you learn anything new about someone you work with? What did you learn?

6. (a) *Recap the strengths listed on the sheets of newsprint and point out how they represent potential resources to the Head Start community.* For example, staff with artistic talents may be able to engage "uninvolved" families in art classes; staff with good interpersonal skills may be able to initiate a support group for isolated parents; and, staff with connections to the broader community may be able to link families with new sources of support.

   (b) Encourage staff to suggest ways they might use personal strengths and resources in supporting families. Record ideas on a sheet of newsprint labeled "Resources." During the process of recording, emphasize the success of staff in drawing out the strengths in one another and encourage them to continue to incorporate a perspective of strengths into their interactions with one another.

7. *To conclude the activity, ask staff to turn again to handout 1.* Suggest they spend the next few minutes adding strengths they did not recognize at the beginning of the activity. In addition, suggest staff complete the Module 2 activity 1 section of their training journals.

Activity 2-2: Drawing Out Strengths



Purpose: To enhance staff skills in drawing out personal and co-worker strengths as resources for Head Start families.

Preparation

Before conducting this coaching activity, review activity 1: *Discovering Strengths*. Key concepts, presentation materials, and summary points from the workshop activity will help prepare you for this activity.

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 2: *Looking for Strengths*

1. *Introduction.* Provide the staff you are coaching with a brief overview of the topics and skills addressed in this module's activities. Discuss the purpose of this activity and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. *Warm-up discussion.* Assist staff in identifying personal strengths in each of the following areas:

   - Special skills, talents, or hobbies;
   - Personal characteristics, such as being a caring person or having an optimistic attitude about life; and
   - "Connections" to the broader community, such as membership in a local church.

3. *Emphasize personal strengths as potential resources for families.* Point out that personal strengths are important resources in the Head Start community. Provide some examples of how various staff have turned personal strengths into resources for Head Start families, such as starting a grandparent support group or teaching a class on meal planning to teen parents. Ask staff to identify some ways they might use their personal strengths to enrich the Head Start community's resources for families. Record staff ideas on newsprint.

4. *Enhance skills for drawing out strengths in others.* Suggest staff identify five co-workers they know the least well and interview them to learn about the strengths they bring to the Head Start community. Refer staff to the handout entitled "Looking for Strengths" and explain how it can be used to guide the interviewing process. Have staff report back on the outcomes of their interviews with co-workers within the next two weeks.

5. *Conduct a debriefing session.* Ask staff to tell you about the interviews they had with co-workers. Use the following questions as a guide:

   - What did you learn about your co-workers that was new to you?
   - What kinds of feelings did co-workers express/reveal during and after the interviews?
   - How successful do you feel you were in drawing out co-worker strengths?
   - How might you continue to draw out the strengths in co-workers as you do your job?

6. *Support change in staff practices.* Review the list of ideas for enriching the resources of the Head Start community developed during Step 3, as well as the co-worker strengths identified during Step 5. Assist staff in developing a plan for turning at least one strength into a resource for Head Start families. Establish a time to meet again with staff to discuss the progress of their plan.

Activity 2-3: Offering Support to Families

Purpose: To enhance the efforts of the Head Start community in supporting families through clarification of how each staff member contributes, or can contribute, to the support of families.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 3: *Family Scenario — The Baker Family*
- Handout 4: *Showing Support*

1. *Open the activity.* Ask staff to take turns describing one way they have provided support to a Head Start family or another family they know.

2. *Provide a broad definition of "support" based upon staff examples and the following presentation material.*

   There are many ways we provide support to others in any given day. We may do simple things, such as helping someone find an item in the grocery store, or offering a neighbor a ride to work. We may give instructions, loan a book, or encourage someone to relax. To help others feel better, we may listen to a child complain about a playmate, a spouse describe a "terrible day," or a friend reveal problems in a marriage. We may act as a sounding board for a co-worker who is trying to decide where to live, an adolescent who is confused, or a relative who is upset about work. We may teach a child how to express anger more appropriately, or offer our companionship to a recently widowed friend. We may show a parent how to fill out a form or how to calm a crying child. In essence, support means letting others know we value and care about them. All of us give and receive support every day.

3. *Expand upon the concept of "support."* Stress that staff bring much experience in supporting others to the Head Start community; and, all staff have a role in supporting families. The opportunity for offering support exists at any time any staff member interacts with a family.

4. *Prepare staff for assignment.* Explain that in this activity staff will learn more about the ways each staff member contributes to the support of families in the Head Start community. Refer staff to handout 3, which presents an example of a Head Start family in need of a great deal of support. Explain that staff are to read the scenario and then answer the

questions raised on handout 4. Explain that staff are to work independently for the next 20 minutes. When the group reconvenes, staff will be asked to share their responses to the questions.

5. *Process the assignment.* After 20 minutes, reconvene the group and discuss staff roles in supporting the Baker family. To guide the discussion, ask staff to take turns briefly explaining their work responsibilities and the types of interaction they have with families as a result. Next, ask staff to focus on the Baker family and share examples of what they might say and do to show their support.

6. *Expand upon examples.* Expand upon examples of staff-family interaction by asking staff to identify informal "intervention moments" with families, such as greeting times at the beginning or end of the day, and how they might use these moments to initiate or strengthen their relationship with a family. In addition, encourage staff to consider how they might capitalize upon each other's strengths in efforts to support a family exhibiting multiple needs, such as the Baker family.

7. *Draw the activity to a close.* Reinforce the key concepts and summarize the variety of ways staff interact and support families. Give staff a few minutes to complete the Module 2 activity 3 section of their training journals.

Activity 2-4: Showing Support

Purpose: To clarify staff roles in providing support to families and in linking families with Head Start and broader community resources.

Preparation

Prior to conducting this coaching activity, review activity 3: *Offering Support to Families*. Key concepts, presentation materials, and summary points from the workshop activity will help prepare you for this activity.

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 3: *Family Scenario: The Baker Family*
- Locate or develop an organizational diagram of Head Start staff. Copy the diagram onto a sheet of newsprint.

1. *Introduction.* Discuss the purpose of this activity with the staff you are coaching and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. *Warm-up exercise.* Ask staff to think about the ways they have been supported by others during the past week and to list the ways on a sheet of newsprint. Go over the list with staff and help them add to the list by asking questions such as these:

- Was there a time during the week when you felt someone really listened to you? "Reached out" to you? What did that person say or do?

- Was there a time during the week when you felt someone really cared about you? Valued you? What did the person say or do?

- Was there a time during the week when someone "stepped in" to help you cope with a stressful experience? What did the person say or do?

3. *Expand upon the meaning of "support."* Ask staff to develop a second list on a sheet of newsprint: this time a list of the ways they have supported others during the past week. When the list is completed, point out that all interactions among people provide opportunities for giving or receiving support. With regard to Head Start families, support is not limited to any particular type of activity or service, but is conveyed through the ways staff relate to families.

4. *Apply staff practices to a sample family.* Ask staff to read handout 3. Afterwards, discuss staff practices and opportunities for showing the Baker family support. Raise questions, such as the following, during the discussion:

   - In carrying out your job, what opportunities would you have to interact with the Baker family?

   - In what ways could you offer support to the Baker family?

   - What could you say or do to help Mrs. Baker become an active member of the Head Start community?

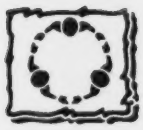
   - What resources within Head Start or the broader community might be of help to the Baker family? How would you link the Baker family with those resources?

> **Coaching Note:** If staff have difficulty responding to the last question above, ask them to talk with other staff about resources they turn to when families need help. Set a time for staff to report back to you with findings.

5. *Clarify processes for linking Head Start families with resources.* Refer staff to the sheet of newsprint showing the diagram of the Head Start organization. Make sure staff understand the primary role and responsibilities of each staff position shown on the diagram. Provide specific examples of the ways various staff interact and provide support to Head Start families. Discuss internal and external referral procedures for getting families linked with needed resources.

6. *Reinforce the referral process.* Take two or three examples of unmet needs evident in the Baker family and "walk" staff through the referral process. Then, ask staff to identify an unmet need in a family they work with. Help staff develop a plan for linking the family with a resource to address the need. Ask staff to follow through with their plan and report back to you within two weeks.

Activity 2-5: Working as a Team



Purpose: To produce an integrated team approach to family support within the Head Start community.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 5: *Role Play — A Team Approach to Family Support*

1. *Introduction.* Explain that teamwork is, perhaps, the most important factor contributing to the effective support of families in the Head Start community. In this activity, staff will examine the Baker family again; however, this time staff will demonstrate a team approach to the family through role play.

> **Trainer's Note:** Make sure staff understand the purpose of the role play is to simulate a team meeting, where staff come together with Mrs. Baker to pool resources aimed at helping her deal with her current situation.

2. *Form small groups.* Assist staff in forming small groups, each comprised of staff representing a variety of job positions in the same Head Start community. Ask each small group to appoint a facilitator and a reporter.

3. *Refer **group facilitators** to handout 5 and ask them to review the instructions.* Explain that reporters will be asked to report on the outcomes of their small group's role play and discussion when the large group reconvenes.

4. *Debrief the role plays.* Allow 45 minutes for the small group role plays and discussions; reconvene staff and ask for reports from the small groups. Make sure reporters address all the issues raised in the handout, as presented below:

   - Did your small group represent all the key members of a Head Start team? Were any key team members missing?

- Did members of your team show respect for one another during the meeting? Share feelings of concern for the Baker family?
- Did everyone participate during your meeting?
- Did members of your team gain a better understanding of the Baker family's strengths and needs?
- Was your team successful in helping Mrs. Baker see herself from a perspective of strengths?
- Did members of your team agree on the initial goal(s) set during your meeting? Was everyone clear about their role in achieving the goal(s)?
- What follow-up plans did your team make for staying informed? Who agreed to take the lead role? When did you decide to meet again?

5. *Discuss and summarize key points.* After reporters have completed their presentations, encourage staff to explore any differences in the ways the issues were addressed by the small groups. Make sure the following points are made in drawing the activity to a close:

   - A comprehensive assessment of a Head Start family's strengths and needs requires the involvement of all staff. Each staff member has a unique understanding of the family, resulting from his or her personal observations and interactions with the family. Through a team approach, a clearer and more complete picture of a family is realized.
   - Of all members of the team, the family is the most critical member. In a team approach to family support, families "lead" the team in defining family strengths, concerns, and goals.
   - Initial team goals must focus on building/strengthening staff-family partnerships. Partnerships are at the core of family support; they are built through recognizing family strengths and being responsive to what the family perceives as its most pressing concern(s).
   - Effective teamwork is a process that involves: establishing a common goal; developing "bridges" among members based on shared feelings of concern; respecting the contributions of all team members; defining the roles of individual team members; and, establishing frequent and clear channels of communication among team members.
   - A team approach to family support capitalizes upon the strengths and resources of all team members.

6. *End the activity.* Ask staff to complete the Module 2 activity 5 section of their training journals.

Activity 2-6: Practicing Team Work

Purpose: To enhance the abilities of staff to contribute to an effective team approach with families.

Preparation

Prior to conducting this coaching activity, review activity 5: *Working as a Team.* Key concepts, presentation materials, and summary points from the workshop activity will help prepare you for this activity.

Make arrangements for staff to observe a team that is meeting with a family to develop a plan of support. This may be a program team meeting or a meeting held by another Head Start program or by another agency.

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 6: *Team Observation Guidelines*

1. *Introduction.* Discuss the purpose of this activity with the staff you are coaching and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. (a) *Warm-up exercise.* Ask staff to think for a minute or two about what the word "team" means to them and record their thoughts on a sheet of newsprint. Go over the words and phrases on the newsprint with staff, discussing the components of an effective team and providing some examples as you do so. Make sure the following components of a team are covered during the exercise:

   - Agreement on the team's goal (e.g., team members agree to work with the X family to connect the family with supportive resources);
   - An emotional bond among team members (e.g., team members share the X family's feelings of concern about children);
   - Mutual respect (e.g., team members recognize and value each other's viewpoints about the X family's strengths and needs);
   - Defined roles (e.g., the roles of individual team members in achieving the team's goal are clear to all members); and
   - Clear communication (e.g., frequent and open channels of communication exist among team members).

   (b) Reinforce to staff that the team process of developing a plan to support a family is always done with the family.

3. *Prepare staff for observation of the team meeting.* Explain the arrangements for staff observation of a team meeting. Provide staff with

handout 6. Explain that, as staff observe the meeting, they are to take notes in response to the questions on the handout; afterwards, you will meet to discuss and analyze the team's effectiveness.

4. *Conduct a debriefing on the observed team meeting.* Following the team meeting, ask staff to share their observations of the team in action. Reinforce the components of an effective team during the discussion, using the observations of staff to illustrate the ways the team did or did not convey the components of an effective team. Make sure that all questions on handout 6 are covered in the debriefing.

5. *Reinforce the advantages of a team approach with families.* Engage staff in a discussion about the importance of teamwork in Head Start, using the following questions as a guide.

   - During the observed meeting, what are some ways that individual members contributed to a better understanding of the family? To plans for meeting the family's needs?
   - How might you have contributed to the meeting, if you had been a team member?
   - What are the advantages of staff and families working together as a team?

6. *Support teamwork practices.* Make sure that staff understand that every member of the Head Start community has a role in identifying and supporting the goals of families. Help staff identify some practices they can employ in their jobs to promote teamwork, such as:

   - Bringing concerns about a child or family to the attention of other staff;
   - Seeking out the viewpoints of all staff who are in contact with a family in need of support; and
   - Making certain that a family in need of support is connected with the appropriate resources of the Head Start community.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 2 are presented below. After completing Module 2, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually or as part of a small team.

- **Discovering Strengths in Head Start Families**

  Ask staff to identify at least three strengths in three different Head Start families during the course of their work in the next two weeks. Suggest that as staff converse with families they ask questions, such as those in handout 2: *Looking for Strengths*, to draw out family strengths. Have staff keep a log of the families' responses to their questions. Arrange for staff to meet and share the strengths they discovered among Head Start families. Categorize the strengths according to "Skills," "Personal Characteristics," and "Community Connections." Have staff "brainstorm" contributions families might make to the Head Start community, based upon the strengths they discovered.

- **Turning Staff Strengths Into Community Resources**

  Have staff review examples of potential resources to the Head Start community, which evolved in the activity 1 or 2 discussion on staff strengths. Ask staff to select one of the examples and pursue its development in their work. Establish a timeframe for completing the assignment based upon the complexity of the task.

- **Finding Solutions to Family Concerns**

  Over the course of their work in the next two weeks, ask staff to keep a log of any concerns they have about specific Head Start families. For example, a bus driver might note concern about a child who usually cries on the way to Head Start, a cook might note concern about a child who is a very "picky" eater, a family worker might note concern about a parent's health, a teacher might note concern about the conditions in a family's home. At the end of the two weeks, ask staff to meet, take turns sharing the entries in their logs, and discuss how to address the concerns. Have staff focus their discussion on these two questions: Who else in Head Start should know about the concern? What can I do to help resolve the concern?

- **Using a Team Approach**

  Ask teams from activity 5 role play to reconvene and establish a plan for meeting with an actual family new to the Head Start community. During the planning process, have team members discuss these questions:

  - What do we know about the family so far?

  - Do we have any concerns about the family?

- What else would be helpful for us to know about the family?

- What do we want to accomplish in our first meeting with the family?

After the meeting is held, conduct a debriefing with staff to examine the meeting's process and outcomes. Have staff discuss what they will do next to strengthen their relationships with the family and how they will help the family become an integral member of their team.

Handout 1: My Strengths

Instructions

You will complete the two sections of this handout at different times during this activity. The trainer will give you directions on when and how to complete each section.

Part I: Personal strengths I bring to the Head Start community:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Part II: Strengths I discovered in myself during this activity:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

65

Handout 2: Looking for Strengths

Instructions

In this activity, you and your partner will interview each other to learn more about each other. Some questions are listed below to guide the process; you may want to take some notes along the way. Each partner has 10 minutes to ask questions; in 20 minutes the large group will reconvene. At that time, partners will introduce each other to the group.

- What do you do for fun?
- Do you have any hobbies or special interests?
- What jobs have you had?
- What do you like best about your current job?
- Who are your close friends and why are they special to you?
- What groups, clubs, or organizations have you worked with during the past year where you felt useful and/or learned a lot?
- What do you like about yourself?
- What makes you feel happy?
- When you are feeling "down" what helps you to feel better?
- What are you most proud of accomplishing in your life?
- If you could achieve one goal within the next year, what would it be?

Handout 3: Family Scenario: The Baker Family[4]

Mrs. Baker is a 38-year-old single Head Start parent with 5 children, ranging in age from 16 months to 10 years. The 3-year-old, Emily, is enrolled in the Head Start center. Emily often is sick and has "trouble listening, following rules, and sitting still." There are also some concerns about the other children. The 16-month-old, Jimmy, appears withdrawn and frail. The three children in elementary school are having problems learning and are often tardy or absent. Mrs. Baker, herself, has difficulty reading and writing; she dropped out of school in the 7th grade to care for her ill mother and "never went back."

Mrs. Baker recently moved here to be near her cousin, who has turned out to be more "distant than a stranger." Mrs. Baker, an "only child," has no other relatives and will not discuss her husband. She has not made any friends, nor is she involved in the community in any way.

Mrs. Baker is friendly and attractive, but overweight. She says she is a diabetic, always tired, and "just doesn't feel like doing anything." She does not have a family doctor.

Public assistance is the Baker family's only source of income. Mrs. Baker talks about not having enough money to buy clothes or shoes for the children. She says the children often cannot go to school or play outside because they don't have the "right things to wear." She also says the family doesn't get enough food stamps, so the children are often hungry and irritable. The family had a telephone, but it was disconnected four months ago due to nonpayment of the bill.

Mrs. Baker is unhappy about moving here. She says she never has had many friends but, at least in her hometown, she knew some people and some people knew her. She never would have moved, if she had known her cousin was going to act like "we are not even related." Now, she doesn't have the money to move back, and even if she did, "there's no place there to live." Mrs. Baker "dreams" about having a larger place for her family, but says "we'll just have to stay where we are because no one else will rent to us."

The Baker's live in a sparsely furnished four-room apartment. The two oldest children sleep on a mattress on the floor of the living room. In the kitchen, a chair is propped against the refrigerator door to keep it closed. Mrs. Baker says she cannot buy much food at a time, because it spoils in the refrigerator, so she often sends the children to the corner grocery for food.

Mrs. Baker has never been to the Head Start center, saying "It is too hard for me to get there without a car and I don't have anyone to babysit for Jimmy." She says she has "not been able to get out" to keep the children's appointments at the health clinic either, even though she knows she should.

Despite the many problems facing the Baker family, Mrs. Baker expresses the desire to "do better" for her children. She is able to show the children affection and seems interested in having someone to talk to about her "worries." However, at this time, Mrs. Baker appears to be immobilized by the stresses of her current situation.

[4]Adapted from *Head Start Social Services Training Manual.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990.

Handout 4: Showing Support

Instructions

After you finish reading the handout ***Family Scenario: The Baker Family,*** *think about your answers to the questions listed below. When the group reconvenes, you will be asked to share your ideas on ways of showing the Baker family your support.*

- In doing your job, what opportunities would you have to interact with the Baker family?

- How could you be a source of support to the Baker family? In answering the question, consider the following

  - What could you say or do to help Mrs. Baker become involved in the Head Start community?

  - What could you say or do to develop a relationship with Mrs. Baker?

  - What could you say or do to link the Baker family with resources in the Head Start or broader community?

Handout 5: Role Play: A Team Approach to Family Support

Instructions for Facilitator

In this activity your group will do a role play of a Head Start team meeting with the Baker family. The setting for the role play is a Head Start classroom. As the group's facilitator, assign one member of your group to the role of Mrs. Baker. Tell other members of the group they are to role play the staff positions they actually have in Head Start. You have the role of team leader/facilitator.

To begin the role play, greet the staff team members and ask them to come and meet Mrs. Baker. After the greetings, make sure you explain the team is meeting to discuss: 1) the strengths and needs of the Baker family; 2) initial goals the team might work toward; and, 3) ways the team might achieve the goals.

Give role players a few minutes to review handout 3: ***Family Scenario: The Baker Family*** *and think about the upcoming team meeting. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for the role play. Then, lead the group in a discussion, using the questions below as a guide. You have approximately 30 minutes to complete the discussion.*

Discussion Questions

- Did our small group represent all the key members of a Head Start team? Were any key members missing?
- Did we show respect for each other during our meeting? Share our feelings of concern for the Baker family?
- Did everyone participate during our meeting?
- Do we have a better understanding of the Baker family's strengths and concerns now?
- Was our team successful in helping Mrs. Baker see herself from a perspective of strengths?
- Do all of us agree on the initial goal(s) set during our meeting? Is everyone clear about his or her role in achieving the goal(s)?
- How will we stay informed as a team? Who will take the lead role? When will we meet again?

Handout 6: Team Observation Guidelines

Instructions

Before you observe the team meeting, review the questions listed below. If any of the questions are not clear to you, ask your coach for help. During the meeting, use this handout to record notes about your observations of the team.

- Who are the members of the team? What family members are participating?

- Why is the team meeting? Is the goal of the team clear? Do all team members agree on the goal?

- Do team members show respect for each other during the meeting? Listen to each other? Encourage each other to contribute to the discussion? Share feelings of concern about the family?

- Do all team members participate in the meeting?

- Does the team identify and build upon the family's strengths?

- What decisions are reached during the meeting? Is the family actively involved in the decision-making process?

- Is it clear who will do what as a follow-up to the meeting? Who will take the lead role in keeping team members informed and on task?

Connecting With the Broader Community

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will:

- Demonstrate attentive listening skills;
- Establish partnerships with families aimed at increasing their participation in community life;
- Interact with families in a manner that encourages them to take active roles in the community's family support efforts; and
- Collaborate with others in the development and implementation of plans aimed at supporting and strengthening families.

Key Concepts

Activities 1 and 2

- **Listening Is a Critical Skill.** In dealing with colleagues and families in knowing how to respond to them, one of the most important skills to learn is how to listen. Through listening, we build trust, show our interest and concern, help others feel better for having talked, and enable others to act in their own behalf.
- **Listening Is a Learned Behavior.** We begin to learn how to listen, what to listen for, and whom to listen to very early in our development. We become accustomed to listening in a certain way. Most of us do not think about listening as a learned behavior and, therefore, do not think much about how we listen.
- **Attentive Listening Requires Practice.** Attentive listening is not only hearing what someone is saying, but also understanding what the person really means. It requires that we set aside our views, biases, criticisms, or approvals and learn to listen non-judgmentally.

Activities 3 and 4

- **Families Are Part of Communities.** Just as the Head Start community has traditionally viewed its work with children within the context of families, it must now broaden its work with families within the context of the broader community. For families to be stable and thriving, they need services from the broader community and they also need to be actively involved in community life. The Head Start community is uniquely structured to respond to both types of need.
- **Families Benefit Through Active Participation in Community Life.** The broader community includes informal networks (e.g., gathering places in the neighborhood, cultural markets), as well as organized groups, which offer families the opportunity to participate as members, rather than as service recipients. Through membership in such networks and groups, families are able to develop supportive relationships with other members, contribute to community life, and work with other members toward

solving problems of mutual concern. In essence, families learn how to act in their own behalf, rather than waiting for other people to act in their behalf.

Activities 5 and 6

- **An Alliance Between Head Start Families and Staff Can Be a Powerful Force in the Development of Broader Community Resources for Families**. The broader community also includes formal organizations that provide assistance to families. When the broader community is able to offer a pyramid of assistance that matches the pyramid of family needs, problems are likely to be solved or alleviated at earlier stages and at less expense. Head Start staff-family alliances can spur the development of the pyramid of assistance for families.

- **Opportunity Exists for Local Head Start Programs to Provide Leadership in Support for Families.** Family support opens paths to Head Start staff for forming, renewing, or rebuilding partnerships with the broader community. Because of staff success in working with families to provide comprehensive and integrated services, local Head Start programs have the potential to lead the broader community in making life better for children and families.

- **Family Support Is a Collaborative Effort.** Support for families requires collaboration among Head Start staff and families and other resources in the broader community. Everyone must be included to "do the job" well. As in forming alliances with families, staff must be prepared to *reach out* to organizations in the broader community, learn about them, and build upon their strengths and resources.

- **Plan for Success.** In developing a plan of action, it is important for the Head Start team to build for success. Building for success means recognizing the perspectives and strengths of all team members during the planning process. It also means beginning with steps that are manageable and likely to be implemented by the team within two to six months. Early success encourages further efforts.

- **Flexibility in Planning Helps Ensure Success**. A good plan of action aimed at supporting families is flexible and fluid. It changes naturally and frequently as a result of the learning process of all involved in its development and implementation.

Background Information

Collaboration is a mindset that says, of course I'm going to need the help of others to do my job well!
— Sidney L. Gardner

This module leads staff into forming partnerships with Head Start families and resources in the broader community. To facilitate the development of partnerships, the module begins with an attentive listening exercise. Staff learn the value of listening and of being listened to as they explore a difficult time in their own lives. The exercise also underscores the importance of helping families "connect" with informal sources of support in the broader community.

As the module continues, emphasis is placed on helping families realize their potential as contributing community members. After identifying recurring concerns of families in the Head Start community, staff examine ways of forming alliances with Head Start families and members of the broader community to address the concerns. In addition, staff consider ways of encouraging families to become actively involved in grassroots membership-based organizations. Staff learn that as they engage families in broader circles of community life, they also help families establish essential connections to supportive resources.

The module concludes with staff developing a collaborative plan of action aimed at mobilizing resources in the broader community for Head Start families. The planning process helps staff solidify the concepts and skills learned during the training program and move forward in their work together to support families.

Instructions

- In addition to the handouts for each activity, duplicate the handout entitled *My Training Journal,* provided in the appendix. The Journal provides staff with a tool for documenting their reactions to the training, identifying ways of applying the training to their jobs, and noting areas for follow-up. It is divided into sections that parallel the guide's learning activities and is to be completed by staff at the conclusion of each activity in all three modules. Encourage staff to discuss their Journal comments with their trainers, coaches, or supervisors after completing each module.

- Before conducting the activities in this module, it is important to engage staff in the learning process with an "icebreaker" discussion on a selected topic. Some examples of icebreaker topics relevant to this module include:

  - How do you feel when someone doesn't listen to you?

  - What is an important resource to you in coping with the demands of life?

  - What is one resource in the broader community you would like to see developed for families?

After giving a personal example or story about the topic selected, ask staff to take turns sharing their thoughts, feelings, or experiences on the topic. Use the comments by staff as a "springboard" for introducing the topics and skills addressed in the module.

- Establish and make certain that staff understand the training program's "ground rules" for maintaining group and family confidentiality.

Activity 3-1: Turning to Others for Help

Purpose: To enhance the development of supportive partnerships through attentive listening.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 1: *Listening Tips*

1. (a) *Introduce the activity.* Explain that in enabling families to use the resources in the broader community, we must be sensitive to their feelings, their past experiences in seeking help, and their attitudes about the help they received. We must "hear" what families have to say, before we can be of help to them in addressing their concerns.

   (b) Continue by explaining this activity gives staff the opportunity to practice attentive listening. Point out that attentive listening is a skill; it is also one of the best ways we show support.

2. *Ask staff to describe a "good listener."* Reinforce staff comments with an overview of attentive listening, using the following points as a guide:

   - When we listen attentively, we display involvement and interest in what a person is saying through both our verbal and non-verbal communication,

   - In our verbal communication, we show interest by asking for clarification about something we do not understand, but we do not express our personal views, biases, criticisms, or approvals. We listen non-judgmentally;

   - In our non-verbal communication, we show interest by our facial expressions, our gestures, and our body posture; and, we are aware of the meaning of our non-verbal communication. For example, when we lean back in our chair and cross our arms in front of our chest, we know our body posture is sending a very different message than when we lean forward slightly with our hands lightly clasped in our lap; and

   - When we listen attentively, we carefully observe the person who is speaking. Through our observations, we are able to learn more about how the person feels about his or her situation, as well as how the person feels about us.

3. *Ask staff to form dyads and turn their chairs so they are facing each other.* Explain that during this activity partners will share a time in their life when they needed help. As they do so, they will also practice attentive listening. Refer to the four statements (on sheets of newsprint), which partners will complete in their *dyads*. For each statement, explain one

partner will be the talker and the other will be the listener. The two roles will reverse as the activity proceeds.

> **Trainer's Note:** Refer to the statements written on the newsprint as you conduct the activity; keep the dyad activity moving quickly; repeat the statements, as necessary, to ensure that the "talkers" understand their assignment; allow only 3 to 4 minutes on each statement.

4. *Ask partners to identify the talker and the listener for the first statement.* The talker's task is to continue the statement after it is read. The listener's task is to respond nonverbally to what is being said through facial expressions, body posture, and gestures. However, if the listener does not understand what the talker said, he or she can ask a question, but only for clarification.

5. *Read the first statement:* "When I think back on a crisis in my family, I remember feeling . . ."

6. *Tell the talkers to think about the statement and then begin.* At the end of three minutes, or when the talk is beginning to slow down, tell the partners to stop, exchange roles and listen to the next statement.

7. *Read the second statement:* "During one of the most stressful times in my life, I felt . . ."

8. *Repeat Step 6.*

9. *Read the third statement:* "When I needed help to solve a difficult problem in my life, I turned to . . ."

10. *Repeat Step 6.*

11. *Read the fourth statement:* "Of all the people who have helped me in my life, I remember . . ."

12. *Process the activity.* After the last statement is completed, reconvene the group and process the activity, using the questions below as a guide:

    - How did it feel to be listened to? Did you feel your partner was interested in what you were saying? Genuinely concerned about you?
    - How did it feel to listen, without responding verbally?
    - What non-verbal messages did you receive from your partner?

13. (a) *Develop linkages between the staff's feelings and experiences in seeking help and those of families in the Head Start community.* Begin by asking staff to "call out":

- The feelings they experienced during a family crisis or a stressful time in their life; and
- The resources they found most helpful or supportive.

(b) As feelings and resources are identified, record them on corresponding sheets of newsprint labeled "Feelings" and "Resources." When responses stop, point out the range of intense feelings experienced by staff during difficult times in their lives. Stress that families, too, experience a wide range of feelings during difficult times — feelings that may pose barriers to seeking or receiving help from others. Attentive listening helps families work through their feelings, move on to problem-solving, and take constructive action on their own behalf.

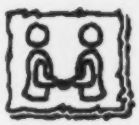
(c) Next, point out that most staff identified "informal" resources as being the most helpful. Stress that many Head Start families have not developed supportive relationships with "informal helpers;" thus, this very valuable resource is missing in their lives. Helping families "connect" with informal sources of support in their communities is one of the most crucial aspects of family support.

> **Trainer's Note:** If time permits, have staff explore the reasons why many Head Start families lack supportive relationships with "informal helpers." Point out that the reasons (e.g., lack of trust in others, conflicts in the past, low self-esteem) pose barriers in helping families develop such relationships. Working with families to overcome the barriers may be a necessary first step.

14. (a) *Closure.* As a closing comment, acknowledge unshared feelings; that is, feelings staff did not feel comfortable revealing during the dyad activity. Point out that families, too, are likely to hide some feelings from staff. Open expression of feelings occurs when trusting partnerships exist between people; attentive listening helps build such partnerships.

(b) To end the activity, encourage staff to continue to practice their attentive listening skills as they interact with each other. Refer staff to handout 1 which offers some additional listening tips. Explain that in the next activity, staff will explore how to "connect" families with both formal and informal resources in the broader community. Provide time for staff to complete the Module 3 activity 1 section of their training journals.

Activity 3-2: Developing Listening Skills



Purpose: To develop skill in forming staff partnerships through attentive listening.

Preparation

Before conducting this coaching activity, review activity 1: *Turning to Others for Help*. Key concepts, presentation materials, and summary points from the workshop activity will help prepare you for this activity.

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 1: *Listening Tips*

1. *Introduction*. Provide the staff you are coaching with a brief overview of the topics and skills addressed in this module's activities. Discuss the purpose of this activity and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. *Warm-up exercise*. Ask staff to describe a time in their life when they experienced a crisis or a very stressful event, how they felt, and how they were helped or supported during that time. Have staff reflect for a minute or two on the characteristics of the person(s) who gave them the most help or support; then ask them to list the characteristics on a sheet of newsprint.

3. *Describe attentive listening*. Go over the list of characteristics on the sheet of newsprint with staff, pointing out those that describe a good listener (e.g., wasn't critical, didn't give advice, seemed truly interested, heard what I was saying). Expand upon the characteristics of a good listener by presenting information on attentive listening. (See information on attentive listening in activity 1.)

4. *Demonstrate attentive listening skills*. Engage staff in a role play to demonstrate attentive listening skills. Ask staff to assume the role of a teacher's aide who is very upset about the way a teacher is handling a classroom problem, with you taking the role of the teacher. Explain that the aide is upset because children are going home with bruises from being hit and pinched by other children in the class. The aide believes the teacher should do a better job of protecting the children. Give staff a minute or two to think about their role and what they want to say to the teacher. Initiate the role play by stating "I understand you want to talk to me." Continue to role play for three to five minutes.

> **Coaching Note:** Instead of a role play involving an aide and teacher, you may want to substitute a role play depicting a situation more relevant to the staff's position.

5. *Process the role play.* Engage staff in a discussion of the role play, using the questions below as a guide.

   - What feelings did you experience during the role play? Did your feelings change any from the beginning to the end? In what ways?
   - Did you feel I was involved and interested in what you were saying? How did I show my interest?
   - What kinds of non-verbal messages did you receive from me? How did I convey those messages?

6. (a) *Reinforce the impact of non-verbal communication.* Engage staff in an exercise that illustrates the power of non-verbal communication. Turn two chairs back to back — one for you and one for staff. Tell staff you are going to talk on the topic of "When I am very angry I ..." Ask staff to just listen as you talk.

> **Coaching Note:** If you are coaching more than one staff member, select one to participate directly in the exercise, but have the others also turn their chairs away from you.

   (b) After two or three minutes, repeat the exercise; however, this time reverse roles and have staff talk on the topic "When I am feeling 'down' I . . ." Listen to staff for two or three minutes, then stop the process. Discuss how you both felt being unable to see each other in your roles as "talker" and as "listener."

7. (a) *Apply listening skills.* Ask staff to think about a time when they interacted with an upset or angry colleague. Have staff describe the situation and how they responded to the colleague's feelings. Point out that one of the best ways of showing others support at such times is to listen attentively to them, without making any judgments about what they are saying or giving any advice.

   (b) Refer staff to handout 1 and ask them to read it for some additional listening tips. Afterwards, ask staff to identify one or two tips on the handout that might have helped them handle the situation with the colleague more effectively. Repeat the process, with staff describing another situation with a colleague and analyzing what they might have done differently to communicate understanding and support.

8. (a) *Assess staff listening skills.* With staff permission, make arrangements to observe staff having a conversation with a colleague. Explain that you will be looking for ways they show support during the conversation, as well as ways they might improve upon their listening skills.

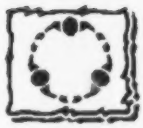
(b) After observing the conversation, ask staff to give examples of the ways they:

- Conveyed non-judgmental — judgmental attitudes about what the colleague was saying;
- Showed sensitivity — insensitivity to the colleague's feelings;
- Showed interest — disinterest in what the colleague was saying; and
- Asked the colleague questions for clarification — made assumptions, or "jumped" to conclusions.

(c) If improvement is needed in the staff's listening skills, ask staff to identify ways they believe their skills could be improved. Make arrangements to observe staff having another conversation with the same or a different colleague. Set a time to provide staff with feedback on your observations.

Coaching Note: As an alternative to Step 8, arrange for staff to observe a co-worker having a conversation with a family. Participate in the observation process. Afterwards, ask staff to assess the co-worker's listening skills, based on the four points above.

Activity 3-3: Engaging Families in the Broader Community



Purpose: To encourage staff to pursue strategies for building the capacity of families to achieve shared goals, support one another, and participate actively in community life.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 2: *A Social Map of Families and Communities*
- Handout 3: *Building a Pyramid of Services*

1. *Introduction.* Explain that in this activity staff will identify recurring concerns of families in the Head Start community, as well as potential resources in the broader community to address these concerns. They will also explore strategies for strengthening the capacity of families to act in their own behalf and contribute to community life.

2. *Clarify differences in community resources.* Make a distinction between community resources offering families the opportunity to participate as contributing members and community resources providing services to families as clients or consumers. Refer staff to handout 2 to reinforce the

distinction. Ask staff to reflect for a minute or two on their own experiences as "contributing community members" and as "clients" or "consumers." Engage staff in a brief discussion on the feelings they remember from the three different types of experiences.

3. *Conduct a brainstorming exercise.* Refer staff to handout 3 which illustrates the varying needs of families. Next, ask staff to "brainstorm" the recurring concerns of families in their Head Start community. As areas of concern are "called out," record them on a sheet of newsprint labeled "Family Concerns." Suggest staff consider the following areas of concern, if they are not identified during the brainstorming exercise:

   - adult education,
   - self-defense,
   - affordable housing,
   - employment,
   - protection from neighborhood crime,
   - health coverage,
   - child care,
   - job training,
   - substance abuse prevention and treatment,
   - food and clothing, and
   - legal assistance.

> **Trainer's Note:** If staff identify the lack of informal networks of support for families as a concern, record the concern on the newsprint and circle it for later group discussion. If staff do not identify that concern, add it to the list and explain it will be addressed later.

4. *Establish priorities.* Ask staff to review the list of recurring concerns and rank them in terms of priority, from most to least urgent or pressing. Next, ask staff to review the top five areas on the list and select two they believe a group of Head Start families might be able to take constructive action on. Explain that the group will now focus on those two concerns.

> **Trainer's Note:** As you lead staff through steps 3 and 4, point out the value of involving Head Start families in the process of identifying and ranking shared concerns. The same process used in training can be replicated by staff with groups of families. Once families determine the most pressing concerns they have in common, they can be helped by the Head Start community to take constructive action together to address the concerns.

5. (a) *Divide the large group into two (or more) groups, with each group assigned to one of the two concerns just identified.* Ask staff to address the following three issues (displayed on newsprint) in their small group.

   - How can we get Head Start families interested in helping us address the concern?
   - What groups, organizations, or leaders in the broader community might be willing to help us?
   - What can we do to encourage the groups, organizations, or leaders in the broader community to work with us?

   (b) Ask each group to appoint a facilitator and a reporter. Suggest that facilitators use "brainstorming" to help their groups respond to the three questions. Explain that staff will reconvene in 30 minutes to discuss the outcomes of their group's work.

6. *Debrief the small group activity.* After 30 minutes, reconvene the large group and ask reporters to share the results of their group's discussion. After recapping the reporters' presentations and allowing time for further discussion, bring closure to this part of the activity. Emphasize that, as evident from the group's work and discussion, families can be encouraged by staff to take responsible action around shared concerns. The alliance established between staff and families can be a powerful force in getting the broader community involved, as well.

7. *Bring the group's attention back to the importance of helping families experience the support of informal networks.* Ask staff to "call out" examples of informal sources of support for families. Make sure examples include:

   - Neighborhood gathering places, such as cultural markets;
   - Respected individuals, such as elders;
   - Extended family and friends; and
   - Grassroots membership-based organizations, such as churches, art-cultural groups, ethnic and neighborhood associations, mutual-help groups, special interest clubs, and youth groups.

8. (a) *Develop a grassroots directory.* Explain that the group will now focus on grassroots membership-based organizations as potential resources for engaging families in community life. Emphasize all families need to be members of organizations that use their skills and value their contributions. For many low income families that need is acute; it is also a need that can be met through the Head Start community.

   (b) Explain that giving families a directory of grassroots organizations is one way staff can encourage family involvement in community life. Ask staff to initiate a directory by "calling out" the names of the grassroots

organizations they belong to or know of. Record the names on a sheet of newsprint labeled "Grassroots Organizations." Suggest a few staff volunteer to complete the directory at a later time and distribute it to all Head Start staff and families.

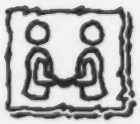
> **Trainer's Note:** If the local Head Start program already has a directory of grassroots organizations, substitute Step 8 with a discussion on updating and/or distributing the directory.

9. *Encourage the group to identify other strategies for engaging families in community life.* Make sure the following strategies are included:

   - Learn about the interests of individual families and tell them about community groups or programs that match their interests;
   - Organize staff-family visits to grassroots organizations, or invite representatives from the organizations to speak to the Head Start community;
   - Invite community leaders to speak to the Head Start community about issues of special interest to families and how families can help resolve the issues;
   - Invite families to be the "guests" of staff at events or meetings held in the community; and
   - Provide nominal funding for membership fees, etc. to organizations that Head Start families wish to join, but are unable to afford.

10. *Conclude the activity.* Restate the key concepts and encourage staff to continue the work initiated during the activity. Provide time for staff to complete the Module 3 activity 3 section of their training journals.

Activity 3-4: Encouraging Family Involvement in Community Life



Purpose: To reinforce the importance of community life for families and identify strategies staff can employ to mobilize families around a shared need.

Preparation

Before conducting this coaching activity, review activity 3: *Engaging Families in the Broader Community.* Key concepts, presentation materials, and summary points from the workshop activity will help prepare you for this activity.

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape

- Handout 2: *A Social Map of Families and Communities*

1. *Introduction.* Discuss the purpose of this activity with staff you are coaching and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. *Warm-up exercise.* Ask staff to describe a personal experience as a contributing member of a "community" (e.g., a church volunteer, a youth activity leader, taking a group of neighborhood children to the movies, the library or on a hike, visiting an elderly neighbor), and the feelings they remember. Then, ask staff to reflect on a personal experience as a client or consumer of community services (e.g., a hospital patient). After a minute or two for self-reflection, ask staff to describe the feelings they remember from that experience. Point out differences in the two sets of feelings identified by staff and discuss their implications (e.g., feeling valued versus feeling vulnerable, feeling supported versus feeling dependent).

3. (a) *Expand upon family roles in the community.* To illustrate the three primary roles families have in the broader community, refer staff to handout 2.

   (b) Provide examples of ways families are: 1) contributing community members; 2) consumers, and, 3) clients. Stress the importance of helping Head Start families to have more experiences as contributing members of the community. Point out that through such experiences, families develop supportive relationships, feel better about themselves, and learn to act in their own behalf.

4. *Analyze Head Start families' participation in community life.* Engage staff in a discussion of community involvement among Head Start families by raising questions such as these:

   - Do you think most Head Start families see themselves as members, consumers, or as clients of the Head Start community? The broader community?
   - What are some of the ways Head Start families contribute to the broader community?
   - What can you do in your job to encourage Head Start families to become more involved in community life?
   - What grassroots organizations, or other informal networks of support, do you think Head Start families might be interested in joining? How can you help them join?

5. (a) *Explore strategies for mobilizing families around shared concerns.* Explain that another way of encouraging families to become contributing members of the community is to help them organize around a mutually shared concern. Point out that an alliance between Head Start staff and

families can be a particularly powerful force in the development of resources for families.

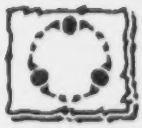
(b) Ask staff to identify some of the recurring concerns of Head Start families that they see in the course of their work. Brainstorm ideas/strategies for encouraging families to begin to work together toward resolving one or more of the concerns, such as:

- Asking families with similar concerns to participate in a focus group discussion;
- Establishing a committee of parents and staff to focus on the concerns; and
- Inviting an "expert" to talk with a group of families and staff about the concern.

(c) As ideas/strategies are presented, list them on a sheet of newsprint.

6. *Encourage staff to pursue the strategies.* Review the strategies listed on the newsprint and ask staff to select at least one strategy they would like to pursue. Suggest staff meet with some co-workers and Head Start families to discuss the strategy and their interest in working together to implement it. Set a time for staff to get back to you with the results of the meeting. Provide follow-up coaching to help staff (and other interested individuals) implement the strategy.

Activity 3-5: Strengthening Family Support Through Team Planning



Purpose: To develop and implement a Head Start plan of action that enlists the broader community in efforts to support and strengthen families.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 4: *A Plan for Action*

1. *Establish the context for the activity, based upon the key concepts and the introductory statements below.*

   Over the course of this training program we have explored the topic of *Building Supportive Communities* from many perspectives. We have learned that a "strong and supportive" Head Start community offers families the opportunity to belong and contribute to both the Head Start community and the broader community. Along the way, we have discussed several strategies for bringing that opportunity closer to all Head Start families. We

have considered ways of showing support in our work, working as a team, and engaging families in community life.

It is now time to turn the discussions about support for families into concrete plans of action. In this activity you will work in small groups to develop a plan aimed at closing one gap in family support. Your group has the option of focusing its plan on: 1) a specific Head Start family; 2) the Head Start community; or, 3) the broader community. Regardless of the focus, the plan must include steps for forming a partnership with a resource (or resources) in the broader community to address the gap.

Let's look at some examples. Your group might develop a plan aimed at "connecting" a specific Head Start family with sources of informal support or with service providers in the broader community. Your group might develop a plan aimed at creating/enhancing a resource for families within the Head Start community, with the help of the broader community. Or, your group might develop a plan aimed at leading the broader community in its provision of supportive services for families.

> **Trainer's Note:** Make certain that staff understand the first option (i.e., a plan that focuses on support for a specific family) is only appropriate for a family that has already discussed the issue with Head Start staff and want staff assistance in resolving the issue.

2. *Assist staff in forming small groups, each comprised of staff representing a variety of job positions in the same Head Start community.* If possible, replicate the group compositions established in Module 2 activity 5: *Working as a Team*. Refer staff to handout 4 which delineates the steps of the team planning process. Emphasize the activity extends beyond the training program; the small groups/teams are expected to implement the plans in their work.

> **Trainer's Note:** Emphasize that staff are expected to develop realistic plans that can be accomplished relatively easily in a short period of time. A small step forward in supporting families can lead to larger steps in the future.

3. (a) *Ask each small group to appoint a facilitator and a reporter.* Point out facilitators are also responsible for overseeing the plan's implementation.

   (b) Explain that the large group will convene in one hour; at that time each reporter will be asked to present the plan his or her group developed.

4. *Debrief the activity.* After one hour, reconvene the large group. Ask a reporter to volunteer and present his or her group's plan; following the

presentation, encourage staff to ask questions or make comments about the plan. Continue the process until all plans are presented and discussed. Commend the groups for the plans they developed and explain that you (or someone else) will be following up on the implementation of each small group's "Plan of Action" in the weeks ahead.

5. *Conclude the activity.* Point out the accomplishments and highlights of the staff's work during the course of the entire training program. Encourage staff to comment on the training program, as well. Provide time for staff to complete Module 3 activity 5 section of their training journals.

Activity 3-6: Contributing to Resource Development

Purpose: To encourage staff to contribute to the development of resources for families through participation on a planning team.

Preparation

Before conducting this coaching activity, review activity 5: *Strengthening Family Support Through Team Planning.* Key concepts, presentation materials, and summary points from the workshop activity will help prepare you for this activity.

Spend a few minutes thinking about your coaching experiences with staff to date. Jot down staff strengths, skills, and interests that may be helpful to refer to during this activity.

For this activity you will need:

- Flipchart/Markers/Tape
- Handout 5: *Planning Steps*

1. *Introduction.* Discuss the purpose of this activity with staff you are coaching and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. *Warm-up discussion.* Go over the various strategies for supporting families that you and staff have explored during previous coaching activities. Engage staff in a discussion of how they might expand their role in family support by contributing to the development or improvement of a resource for families in the Head Start community.

> **Coaching Note**: Make sure you tailor the discussion to the strengths and skills of staff. Help staff be realistic about the resources they would like to see developed or improved and their role.

3. *Explore staff interests in resource development.* Help staff sharpen their ideas for supporting families. Reinforce a "fit" between staff strengths and

the ideas; for example, if staff have a talent for interior decorating, they may be interested in making a family resource room at Head Start more "family friendly," or if staff have teaching skills they may be interested in developing a tutoring program for parents in school. Assist staff in deciding on one idea they want to pursue with a team.

4. *Explore courses of action.* Examine the options staff have for pursuing their idea with a team, such as asking co-workers, family members, and individuals from the broader community to become part of a planning team.

> **Coaching note:** As an alternative to taking a lead role in forming a planning team, explore options staff might have for joining an existing resource development planning team, task force, or committee.

5. *Identify planning steps.* Refer staff to handout 6. With your assistance, ask staff to identify the steps they need to take to organize (or join) a planning team and complete the handout; for example, a first step might be "talk with co-workers about their interest in joining the planning team." Set a time for staff to report back to you on their progress.

6. *Review staff progress.* Ask staff to debrief you on the outcome of their planning steps. As indicated by the outcome, discuss what needs to happen next and how staff will proceed. If staff have organized a planning team, discuss your potential role as the team's coach.

7. *Offer follow-up support.* Establish a plan with staff for coaching the team or for staying informed of the team's progress in establishing the resources for families.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 3 are presented below. After completing Module 3, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually or as part of a small team.

- **Practicing Attentive Listening**

  Ask staff to practice attentive listening during a conversation, an interview, or a meeting with a parent. In doing so, remind staff they should listen, only ask questions to clarify something which is unclear, show interest in what is being said through non-verbal communication, and observe the parent as he or she talks. Have staff report back on the attentive listening experience within the next week: What feelings did the parent communicate? How did staff respond non-verbally to the parent's feelings? What did staff observe as the parent talked? How do staff feel about the outcome of the experience?

- **Involving Head Start Families in Community Life**

  Ask staff to select and implement one strategy for encouraging family involvement in Head Start or the broader community. Some examples include: convening a focus group, comprised of Head Start families, to discuss practical ways families can support each other; conducting a survey of Head Start families to determine their interests and concerns and providing feedback to families on the results; and, visiting a community organization with a family or a group of families interested in working for the organization on a volunteer basis. Establish a timeframe for completion of the assignment based on the complexity of the task.

- **Providing Guidance to Action Planning Teams**

  Meet individually with the teams established during activity 5 in Module 3 to review their action plans and their progress to date. Determine ways of reinforcing and supporting the teams' action plans. Arrange for Head Start staff or consultants to provide assistance to the teams in areas where they are experiencing difficulty.

Handout 1: Listening Tips[5]

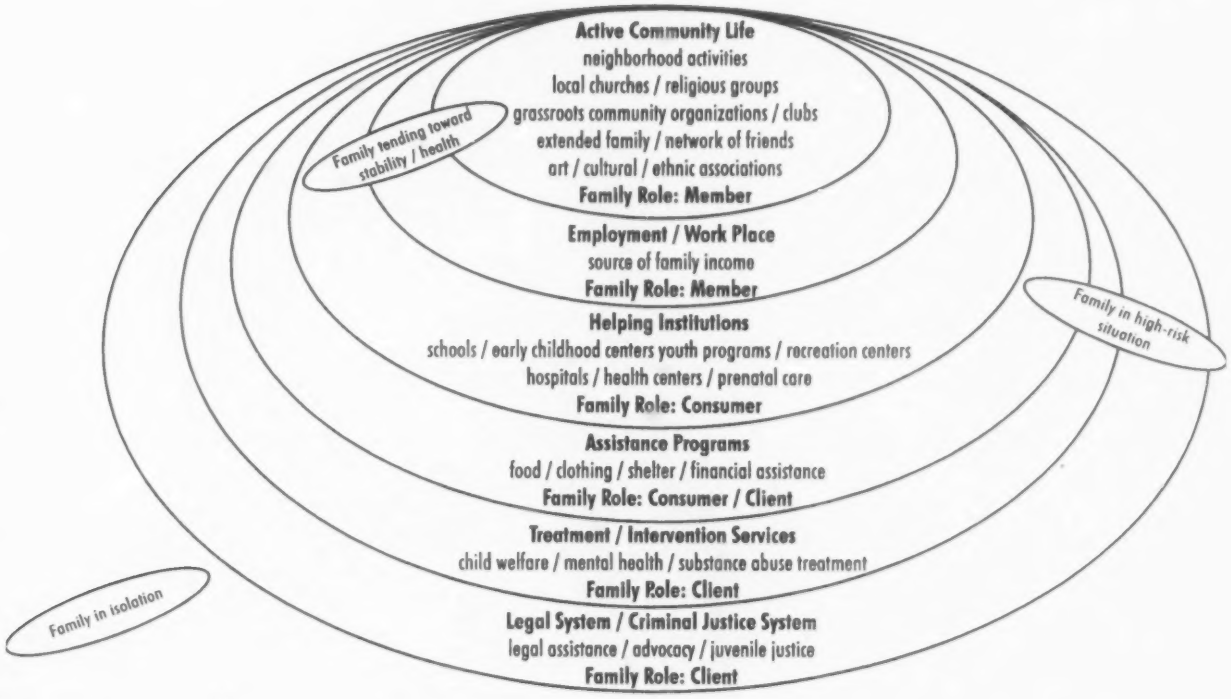
The following techniques will help you improve your listening skills.

- Listen carefully to what others have to say, whether you agree totally or not.
- Listen for the part of what someone is saying that is new and important. Let the person know the information he or she is sharing is important and you appreciate him or her for bringing it to your attention.
- Listen to criticisms about the Head Start program, without becoming defensive.
- Put yourself in other people's "shoes" and try to understand their point of view. Ask questions to clarify exactly what they are saying, before commenting or offering any suggestions.
- Do not listen to rumors about colleagues or families; if rumors persist, investigate them directly.
- After listening to colleagues or families, write down points that require follow-up action or attention.
- Include time in your day to "reach out" to others and listen to "news" about their families, jobs, or other interests.
- Restate what people say to let them know you are listening to them.
- Reinforce the successes colleagues and families are having. Accentuate the positive!
- Deal with any conflicts or issues as they arise; talk to colleagues or families immediately to "clear the air" and work things out. Don't let "things go," hoping they will get better without any action on your part.
- Never leave people with a sense of hopelessness or frustration. Always tell the people when you will get back to them with further information or a response to their concerns.
- Freely admit when you have made an error or don't have an immediate answer to a question.
- Do not use jargon or complicated terms when responding to others; if you are not sure whether they understood what you said, ask them to tell you what they "heard."

[5]Adapted from Beers, M.C., et al. *Parent Involvement in Day Care: A Resource Manual for Day Care Providers.* Creative Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C., 1982.

Handout 2: A Social Map of Families and Communities[6]

The diagram below illustrates the three primary roles of families as they interact with community resources.


Active Community Life
neighborhood activities
local churches / religious groups
grassroots community organizations / clubs
extended family / network of friends
art / cultural / ethnic associations
Family Role: Member
Family tending toward stability / health
Employment / Work Place
source of family income
Family Role: Member
Helping Institutions
schools / early childhood centers youth programs / recreation centers
hospitals / health centers / prenatal care
Family Role: Consumer
Family in high-risk situation
Assistance Programs
food / clothing / shelter / financial assistance
Family Role: Consumer / Client
Treatment / Intervention Services
child welfare / mental health / substance abuse treatment
Family Role: Client
Family in isolation
Legal System / Criminal Justice System
legal assistance / advocacy / juvenile justice
Family Role: Client

[6]Adapted by Chris Carman from *Together We Can — A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education*. United States Department of Education and United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1993.

Handout 3: Building a Pyramid of Services[7]

When communities are able to offer a pyramid of assistance that matches the pyramid of family needs or concerns, problems are likely to be solved or lessened at earlier stages, when they are easier and less costly to address. The illustration below shows how varying degrees of family need or concern can be met by community resources.

As family needs grow in intensity, so do services to meet those needs.
Residential treatment centers
Therapeutic group homes
Foster family homes
Families whose children cannot be protected or treated at home
Intensive family preservation services
Child protective services
Families in crisis
Comprehensive substance abuse treatment
Respite child care
Family-based services
Special health and education services
Families needing specialized assistance
Home visiting programs
Family support centers
Parent education programs
Families needing some extra support
Adequate income, housing, health care, child care, education, and recreational services
All families

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[7] *Children's Defense Fund Reports.* Children's Defense Fund. December, 1993.

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Handout 4: A Plan for Action

Instructions

Review "Part I: Team Planning Steps" below. Then, as a team, discuss and complete "Part II: Action Plan." Remember this is not a practice exercise; you will actually implement the plan your team develops over the course of the next several weeks. The large group will reconvene in one hour; at that time, reporters will be asked to present their team's plans.

PART I: TEAM PLANNING STEPS

During the course of this training program, several strategies aimed at supporting families were identified and discussed. These included strategies for:

- Reaching out to families and encouraging their involvement in the Head Start community;
- Enhancing support for families through "growth and change" within the Head Start community;
- Using the strengths and resources that individual staff and families bring to the Head Start community;
- Developing a team approach to support for families; and
- Helping families realize their potential as contributing community members.

In addition, recurring concerns of Head Start families were identified and ranked in terms of priority.

In this activity your team will develop a plan to meet a gap in family support. Each step in the team planning process is described below.

Step 1: Identifying the Plan's Focus

The first step in the planning process involves identifying the plan's focus or purpose. Your team has the option of developing a plan to:

1) Support a specific Head Start family;

2) Establish or improve a family support resource within the Head Start community; or

3) Establish or improve a family support resource within the broader community.

Handout 4: A Plan for Action (continued)

Step 2: Setting Priorities

During Step 1, your team may uncover several gaps in support for families that you plan could address. For example, if your team decides to focus its plan on a specific Head Start family, the family may have multiple concerns. Or, if your team decides to focus its plan on developing a resource within the identified Head Start community or in the broader community, there may be many competing unmet family needs to consider.

Being overly ambitious can be a major obstacle to the success of your team's plan. The purpose of Step 2 is to narrow the range of possibilities to a manageable level by setting priorities. Thus, during Step 2, your team should discuss the various options your plan might address and establish priorities among them.

Step 3: Engaging the Broader Community in the Plan

An important component of your team's plan is determining which leaders, service providers, organizations, or groups in the broader community may be willing and able to help close the family support gap selected as your team's priority. Thus, during Step 3, your team should explore the full range of possibilities for community involvement.

Step 4: Engaging Head Start Families in the Plan

As emphasized during the training program, families are integral members of the Head Start team. The purpose of this step is to ensure ongoing family participation in your team's action planning process. Thus, if your team's plan focuses on a specific Head Start family, you need to discuss steps for involving the family. If your team's plan focuses on the development of a resource within the Head Start community or the broader community, you need to discuss steps for forming an alliance with Head Start families.

Step 5: Identifying and Assigning Tasks

Developing and implementing a plan of action requires the completion of several tasks. The purpose of this step is to identify:

- The initial tasks involved in carrying out your plan; and
- The group member(s) responsible for completing each task.

Step 6: Establishing Timeframes for the Plan

The purpose of this step is to set realistic target dates for completing the planning process and starting the plan's implementation.

Step 7: Evaluating the Plan and Making Revisions

A good plan of action is open to change. Your team may decide to make some changes in the plan you develop today when you meet again. Additional changes may be necessary once the broader community and families become involved in the planning process. And, still other changes may be indicated as team members work on initial planning tasks. Therefore, the purpose of this step is to set a target date for evaluating your team's plan, revising it, if necessary, and finalizing it.

Handout 4: A Plan for Action (continued)

PART II: ACTION PLAN

Step 1: Identifying the Plan's Focus

To initiate your team's planning process, discuss your options for the plan's focus, the family concerns you might address and the specific strategies you might pursue. Then, select the type of plan your team will develop from the choices below:

- A plan to support a specific Head Start family;
- A plan to create or improve a family support resource within the Head Start community; or
- A plan to create or improve a family support resource within the broader community.

Step 2: Setting Priorities

In setting priorities among the many concerns your plan might address, aim for success. Do not attempt to deal with many concerns in one plan. Focus on concerns that are possible to lessen or resolve within the next few months. Then, record your team's priorities below.

- We have decided on these three concerns as our priorities:

  1)

  2)

  3)

- We will address this priority first:

Step 3: Engaging the Broader Community in the Plan

Again, aim for success as you discuss the options for community involvement in your plan. Consider relationships or linkages which already exist between Head Start staff and the broader community. Then, record your team's decisions below:

- We want to involve the following leaders, service provider(s), organization(s), or group(s) from the broader community in our plan:

  1)

  2)

  3)

Handout 4: A Plan for Action (continued)

- These are the steps we will take to develop partnerships with them:

  1)

  2)

  3)

  4)

Step 4: Engaging Head Start Families in the Plan

Remember, staff-family alliances can be powerful forces in the development of resources for families. As a team, discuss possible strategies for encouraging family involvement in your team's planning process. Then, record your team's decisions below.

- We will take the following steps to encourage family involvement in our plan:

  1)

  2)

  3)

  4)

Step 5: Identifying and Assigning Tasks

As a team, identify the tasks necessary to initiate your plan and the team member(s) who will work on each task. Remember, your group's facilitator is responsible for keeping team members on task. Record the tasks and assignments below, as agreed upon by your team.

We have identified the following initial tasks:

Task 1:

Task 2:

Task 3:

Task 4:

Task 5:

Task 6:

Handout 4: A Plan for Action (continued)

The team member(s) assigned to each task are as follows:

Task 1:

Task 2:

Task 3:

Task 4:

Task 5:

Task 6:

Step 6: Establishing Timeframes for the Plan
As a team, discuss and record realistic target dates for each point below.

- We will meet again to review and refine our plan on: _____
- We hope to engage the broader community in our plan by: _____
- We have agreed to these dates for completing initial planning tasks:
  - Task 1 by _____
  - Task 2 by _____
  - Task 3 by _____
  - Task 4 by _____
  - Task 5 by _____
  - Task 6 by _____

Step 7: Evaluating the Plan and Making Revisions
As a team, discuss when you hope to finish the initial planning process and finalize your plan. Then, record your team's target dates below.

We will evaluate and finalize our plan by this date _____

We hope to achieve our final plan by this date _____

Handout 5: Planning Steps

Instructions

Use the space in the first section below to describe the resource you would like to see developed or improved for families in the Head Start community. In the second section, list the steps you will take to form or join a planning team and your target dates for completing the steps.

SECTION I: RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

SECTION II: STEPS AND TARGET DATES

Step 1: Target Date:

Step 2: Target Date:

Step 3: Target Date:

Step 4: Target Date:

Step 5: Target Date:

Continuing Professional Development

Activities, which Head Start grantees may find useful for reinforcing and expanding staff training on *Building Supportive Communities*, are presented below.

- **Developing Individualized Plans for Professional Growth**

  Have supervisors, coaches, or trainers meet with staff individually to develop plans for professional growth based upon entries in their "Training Journals." (See the handout entitled *My Training Journal* in the appendix.) Provide some examples of professional development plans, appropriate to different types of staff positions, to guide the process.

- **Establishing Peer Support Groups for Supervisors**

  Assist supervisors in establishing an ongoing group to address practice issues raised by their staff. For example, supervisors might want to discuss concerns about staff practices that impede teamwork, family involvement in community life, relationships with other community resources, or the sense of "community" within Head Start. In addition, they might want to pursue broader issues identified by their staff, such as recurring family needs and gaps in resources for families.

- **Learning From Other Family Centered Programs**

  Identify other Head Start programs offering comprehensive family-centered services. Ask representatives from those programs to meet with staff, provide an overview of their services and the hurdles they overcame in developing their programs, and discuss issues of concern to staff. In following weeks, meet with a group of staff to discuss ways of moving toward a more comprehensive family centered program.

- **Strengthening Teamwork**

  Arrange for a Head Start staff member or a consultant with expertise in group dynamics and team-building to observe a Head Start team meeting. Following the meeting, have the expert discuss his/her observations with the team and suggest team-building strategies. Arrange for the same expert to return two to three weeks later to observe another team meeting and provide feedback on the team's progress.

- **Increasing Cultural Competency**

  Involve a group of staff in learning more about the history, values, and practices of different cultures represented in the Head Start community. Help staff develop a set of questions aimed at finding out more about a cultural group and identify ways of getting the questions answered (e.g.,

interviews with cultural leaders). Divide the group into dyads, with each assigned to a specific culture. Ask the dyads to learn about the culture and report back to the group.

- **Reassessing the Family Support Strengths of the Head Start Community**

  Approximately four months after staff have completed Activity 5 in Module 1, reconvene the training group. Ask staff to reassess their Head Start community's family support strengths, using the handout entitled "A Checklist on Community-Building" to guide the process. Lead the group in the re-assessment activity by repeating steps 8 through 10 in Activity 5. Assist staff in evaluating the community's progress since the original assessment and in pursuing newly identified priorities in resource development.

Resources

The resources cited below collectively influenced the contents of this training guide. Familiarity with the resources by trainers, coaches, and supervisors of Head Start staff is recommended as a prerequisite to conducting the guide's learning activities.

- Allen, Mary Lee; Brown, Patricia; and Finlay, Belva. *Helping Children by Strengthening Families — A Look at Family Support Programs.* Children's Defense Fund, 1992. This report provides child advocates and others who work for children's well-being, a clearer idea of what family support programs do, how they operate, and why they are effective — not just for low-income families or families with serious problems, but for all families. Key ideas presented include: every child should get the best possible start in life; prevent problems before they become serious and require costly treatment; and all parents must be prepared for and be supported in their parenting role. The authors focus on strengthening the families' ability to nurture their children physically, emotionally, and intellectually, and enabling parents to respond early to their children's multiple needs, within the family, and before healthy development is compromised. For information on obtaining this report call the Children's Defense Fund at 202/628-8787.

- Carman, Christopher. *A Community Framework for Head Start.* Hawkeye Area Community Action Program, 1994. This article explains why a community framework for Head Start is needed, with an emphasis on increasing family involvement in community life. The proposed Head Start framework approaches families from the vantage point of their strengths, viewing families as active members of their community — not deficient clients in a service system. Goals and strategies for implementing a community framework are presented. An abbreviated version of this article is provided in Module 1 of this guide. A complete version is available through contacting the Hawkeye Community Action Program at 1-800-366-7631.

- Carman, Christopher. *Empowering Head Start Families Through the Use of Community.* Hawkeye Area Community Action Program, 1994. Drawing upon concepts presented by John McKnight, this article illustrates a community-oriented vision for low-income families and provides ideas for applying this vision within Head Start. Four easy-to-follow steps that Head Start programs can take to empower families are offered: 1) the use of community, including identifying and strengthening existing empowering elements; 2) fostering balanced roles for human service programs, 3) assisting families to move out of "dependent client" roles, and 4) developing inclusive communities. Call the Hawkeye Community Action Program at 1-800-366-7631 for information on obtaining this article.

- *Creating a 21st Century Head Start — Final Report of the Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion.* U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau, 1994. This report of the Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion reviews the Head Start program and makes recommendations for improvement and expansion by setting forth a set of recommendations to the federal government, Head Start providers, and the nation at large. The recommendations are organized in accord with three guiding principles: 1) ensure every Head Start program can deliver the Head Start vision; 2) expand the number of children served and the scope of services provided; 3) encourage Head Start to forge partnerships with key community and state institutions and programs in early childhood, family support, health, education, and mental health. This report is available from the Head Start Publications Center 703/739-0875 or Fax 703/739-0878.

- *Looking Ahead: The Promise of Head Start as a Comprehensive Family Support Program.* Family Impact Seminar, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Research and Education Foundation, 1994. This seminar and briefing report presents a historical overview of Head Start's efforts to provide a comprehensive range of services to low-income families and describes some Head Start programs that exemplify its potential as a family support program. The programs described are not the result of a systematic evaluation, or comprehensive survey, but an attempt to identify some of the strategies used by local programs to serve families in more effective ways. This report is available from the Family Impact Seminar 202/467-5114.

- Melaville, Atelia; Blank, Martin; and Gelarch, Asayesh. *Together We Can — A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services.* U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1993. This practical guide assists local communities to create more responsive educational and human service delivery systems. Effective delivery of supports for families, a crucial step toward assuring the future success of America's children, is proposed through a five-step collaborative process. Central to this guide is the concept of systems change, based on a revision of the ways people and institutions think, behave, and use their resources to serve children and families. This guide is dedicated to all people who are working to strengthen families. For information on ordering this guide, contact the Family Resource Coalition at 312/341-0900.

- *Communicating with Parents.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau, 1995. This guide targets Head Start staff who communicate with parents. It focuses on: the value of effective communications in building partnerships with parents; effective speaking and listening skills; clear

and concise writing for a variety of readers; and planning communication strategies at the program level. This guide is recommended as a supplement to *Building Supportive Communities*. *Communicating with Parents* is available from the Head Start Publications Center 703/739-0875 or Fax 703/739-0878.

Handout: Module 1, 2, and 3: My Training Journal

Instructions

At the end of each workshop-coaching activity, complete the relevant sections of this journal, as follows.

- First, note your general reactions to the activity (e.g., how you felt, what you learned, any new thoughts, beliefs, or feelings).
- Second, record your ideas for applying what you learned to your work (i.e., what you might do, or do differently, as a result of the activity).
- Third, within the context of the activity, list any skills, issues, or topics you would like to pursue further with your supervisor, coach, or co-workers.

As part of the follow up to this training program, you may want to discuss your comments with the trainer, your supervisor, and/or your coach. Your comments will be helpful in determining the effectiveness of this training program, as well as in helping you develop a plan for your own professional growth. You will not have to show your comments to anyone.

Handout: My Training Journal (continued)

Module 1 - What Is Community?

ACTIVITY 1: DEFINING COMMUNITY
ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY

1. Overall, what are your reactions to this activity?

2. What do you plan to do, or do differently, as a result of this activity?

3. What skills, issues, or topics would you like to pursue further?

ACTIVITY 3: APPRECIATING FAMILY DIVERSITY
ACTIVITY 4: LEARNING ABOUT FAMILIES

1. Overall, what are your reactions to this activity?

2. What do you plan to do, or do differently, as a result of this activity?

3. What skills, issues, or topics would you like to pursue further?

Handout: My Training Journal (continued)

ACTIVITY 5: ASSESSING HEAD START AS A COMMUNITY
ACTIVITY 6: EXAMINING SUPPORTIVE PRACTICES

1. Overall, what are your reactions to this activity?

2. What do you plan to do, or do differently, as a result of this activity?

3. What skills, issues, or topics would you like to pursue further?

Additional Comments: Are there additional comments you would like to make about the training program? If so, note them in the space below.

Handout: My Training Journal (continued)

Module 2 - Strengthening the Head Start Community

ACTIVITY 1: DISCOVERING STRENGTHS
ACTIVITY 2: DRAWING OUT STRENGTHS

1. Overall, what are your reactions to this activity?

2. What do you plan to do, or do differently, as a result of this activity?

3. What skills, issues, or topics would you like to pursue further?

ACTIVITY 3: OFFERING SUPPORT TO FAMILIES
ACTIVITY 4: SHOWING SUPPORT

1. Overall, what are your reactions to this activity?

2. What do you plan to do, or do differently, as a result of this activity?

3. What skills, issues, or topics would you like to pursue further?

Handout: My Training Journal (continued)

ACTIVITY 5: WORKING AS A TEAM
ACTIVITY 6: PRACTICING TEAM WORK

1. Overall, what are your reactions to this activity?

2. What do you plan to do, or do differently, as a result of this activity?

3. What skills, issues, or topics would you like to pursue further?

Additional Comments: Are there additional comments you would like to make about the training program? If so, note them in the space below.

Appendix

Handout: My Training Journal (continued)

Module 3 - Connecting With the Broader Community

ACTIVITY 1: TURNING TO OTHERS FOR HELP
ACTIVITY 2: DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS

1. Overall, what are your reactions to this activity?

2. What do you plan to do, or do differently, as a result of this activity?

3. What skills, issues, or topics would you like to pursue further?

ACTIVITY 3: ENGAGING FAMILIES IN THE BROADER COMMUNITY
ACTIVITY 4: ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY LIFE

1. Overall, what are your reactions to this activity?

2. What do you plan to do, or do differently, as a result of this activity?

3. What skills, issues, or topics would you like to pursue further?

Handout: My Training Journal (continued)

ACTIVITY 5: STRENGTHENING FAMILY SUPPORT THROUGH TEAM PLANNING
ACTIVITY 6: CONTRIBUTING TO RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

1. Overall, what are your reactions to this activity?

2. What do you plan to do, or do differently, as a result of this activity?

3. What skills, issues, or topics would you like to pursue further?

Additional Comments: Are there additional comments you would like to make about the training program? If so, note them in the space below.

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